Sūrah Mu’min

Central Theme

Like the previous *sūrahs* of this group, this *sūrah* too is based on *tawḥīd* (monotheism). Other principle subjects of the Qur’ān are also discussed in it; however, not in a primary way but in a secondary one – as a consequences of *tawḥīd*.

The Qur’ānic name of this *sūrah* is Ḥā Mīm. The next six *sūrahs* also share this name. All these seven *sūrahs* are generally known as Ḥawā Mīm and like their names discuss similar topics. All these *sūrahs* belong to the period when the extent of discussion between monotheism and polytheism had become so intense that it was increasingly becoming difficult for the Prophet (sws) and his companions to live in Makkah without exposing themselves to persecution. A slight hint of migration can be seen in the previous *sūrahs*. These circumstances will gradually become very clear in this and the succeeding *sūrahs*, and as a consequence the divine promise of support and help will also continue to become even more evident. Muslims who were facing testing times are encouraged in this *sūrah*, those who were facing danger are assured and those who in spite of having a sympathetic attitude towards the call of the Prophet (sws) were as yet not openly supporting it because of some expediency are guided that they should now throw caution to the wind and get ready to strive for the supremacy of this call; the Almighty will help and support them

Analysis of the Discourse

Verses (1-6): This Book has been revealed by the God Who is dominant and mighty and also has knowledge of all things. He also forgives sins and accepts repentance and is stern in retribution and has control and authority. No one is worthy of worship except Him. Everyone will return to Him and every one will be gathered before Him. Only those people are indulging in frivolous arguments in opposition to this Book who are rejecters of reward and punishment. People who are making hey in this land should be a source of misconception for anyone. The history of previous nations of this land is enough for a lesson to be learnt. These nations too indulged in frivolous arguments to defeat the truth and

vanquish the messengers of God; however, before they could lay their hands on their respective messenger, a torment visited them. In a similar manner, the law of retribution of God is coming into play for these arrogant people and because of their rebelliousness and the anarchy they caused they will become the firewood of Hell.

Verses (7-9): Those who have become indifferent to God and the Hereafter relying on the intercession of the angels should know that the favoured angels of God will not intercede for those who rebel against Him; on the contrary, these angels are always busy in celebrating the praises of their Lord and in extolling Him. They believe in God and continue to seek forgiveness for the believers who repent from their evil ways and adhere to the right path.

Verses (10-12): A brief reference to the way in which the Idolaters will confess their crime on the Day of Judgement and plead before the Almighty, and the curse which God will lay on them in response to these pleadings.

Verses (13-20): All mercies and calamities are in the control of God; hence only He is worthy of being worshipped and obeyed. Exalted is He in status and lofty. No one can be aware of His secrets. He is the sole master of the Day of Judgement and no one will be able to intercede for the Idolaters.

Verses (21-22): Evidence is presented from history that nations who denied their respective messengers who called them towards monotheism were visited by divine punishment and at this instance their alleged deities could be of no avail to them. The Quraysh are warned that they too will meet a similar fate if they follow suit.

Verses (23-55): A specific part of the account of Moses (sws) and the Pharaoh is recounted so that a reminder can be sounded to the Prophet Muḥammad (sws) and his companions with regard to the following points:

- the Quraysh are warned that with regard to power and might, the Pharaoh was much superior to them; but when punishment visited them in retribution of their rejection of Moses (sws) then nothing could be of avail to them.
- The Prophet (sws) and his companions are reminded that the trials they are facing at the hands of their opponents should be borne with patience and perseverance; if they staunchly adhere to their view victory will be finally be theirs.
- During the course of this account, the character of a true believer belonging to the family of the Pharaoh is also delineated. This delineation of his character teaches a lesson to the Quraysh and it is

also very encouraging for those who in spite of having sympathy for the true call were hesitant in expressing and declaring it.

Verses (56-85): The arguments in favour of monotheism and the Hereafter found within man and around him are referred to; the Quraysh are warned in explicit words and a promise of help is made to the Prophet (sws) and his companions in a very definite manner.

Text and Translation

Section I: Verses (1-22)

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

حم (١) تَنزِيلُ الْكِتَابِ مِنَ اللهِ الْعَزِيزِ الْعَلِيمِ (٢) غَافِرِ الذَّنبِ وَقَابِلِ التَّوْبِ شَدِيدِ
الْعِقَابِ ذِي الطَّوْلِ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ إِلَيْهِ الْمَصِيرُ (٣) مَا يُجَادِلُ فِي آيَاتِ اللهِ إِلَّا الَّذِينَ
كَفَرُوا فَلَا يَغْرُرْكَ تَقَلُّبُهُمْ فِي الْبِلَادِ (٤) كَذَّبَتْ قَبْلَهُمْ قَوْمُ نُوحٍ وَالْأَحْزَابُ مِن بَعْدِهِمْ
وَهَمَّتْ كُلُّ أُمَّةٍ بِرَسُولِهِمْ لِيَأْخُذُوهُ وَجَادَلُوا بِالْبَاطِلِ لِيُدْحِضُوا بِهِ الْحَقَّ فَأَخَذْتُهُمْ فَكَيْفَ
كَانَ عِقَابِ (٥) وَكَذَلِكَ حَقَّتْ كَلِمَتُ رَبِّكَ عَلَى الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا أَنَّهُمْ أَصْحَابُ النَّارِ (٦)
الَّذِينَ يَحْمِلُونَ الْعَرْشَ وَمَنْ حَوْلَهُ يُسَبِّحُونَ بِحَمْدِ رَبِّهِمْ وَيُؤْمِنُونَ بِهِ وَيَسْتَغْفِرُونَ لِلَّذِينَ
آمَنُوا رَبَّنَا وَسِعْتَ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ رَّحْمَةً وَعِلْمًا فَاغْفِرْ لِلَّذِينَ تَابُوا وَاتَّبَعُوا سَبِيلَكَ وَقِهِمْ عَذَابَ
الْجَحِيمِ (٧) رَبَّنَا وَأَدْخِلْهُمْ جَنَّاتِ عَدْنٍ الَّتِي وَعَدتَّهُم وَمَن صَلَحَ مِنْ آبَائِهِمْ وَأَزْوَاجِهِمْ
وَذُرِّيَّاتِهِمْ إِنَّكَ أَنتَ الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ (٨) وَقِهِمُ السَّيِّئَاتِ وَمَن تَقِ السَّيِّئَاتِ يَوْمَئِذٍ فَقَدْ
رَحِمْتَهُ وَذَلِكَ هُوَ الْفَوْزُ الْعَظِيمُ (٩) إِنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا يُنَادَوْنَ لَمَقْتُ اللهِ أَكْبَرُ مِن
مَّقْتِكُمْ أَنفُسَكُمْ إِذْ تُدْعَوْنَ إِلَى الْإِيمَانِ فَتَكْفُرُونَ (١٠) قَالُوا رَبَّنَا أَمَتَّنَا اثْنَتَيْنِ
وَأَحْيَيْتَنَا اثْنَتَيْنِ فَاعْتَرَفْنَا بِذُنُوبِنَا فَهَلْ إِلَى خُرُوجٍ مِّن سَبِيلٍ (١١) ذَلِكُم بِأَنَّهُ إِذَا دُعِيَ
اللهُ وَحْدَهُ كَفَرْتُمْ وَإِن يُشْرَكْ بِهِ تُؤْمِنُوا فَالْحُكْمُ لِلَّهِ الْعَلِيِّ الْكَبِيرِ (١٢) هُوَ الَّذِي
يُرِيكُمْ آيَاتِهِ وَيُنَزِّلُ لَكُم مِّنَ السَّمَاء رِزْقًا وَمَا يَتَذَكَّرُ إِلَّا مَن يُنِيبُ (١٣) فَادْعُوا اللهَ
مُخْلِصِينَ لَهُ الدِّينَ وَلَوْ كَرِهَ الْكَافِرُونَ (١٤) رَفِيعُ الدَّرَجَاتِ ذُو الْعَرْشِ يُلْقِي الرُّوحَ مِنْ
أَمْرِهِ عَلَى مَن يَشَاء مِنْ عِبَادِهِ لِيُنذِرَ يَوْمَ التَّلَاقِ (١٥) يَوْمَ هُم بَارِزُونَ لَا يَخْفَى عَلَى اللهِ

مِنْهُمْ شَيْءٌ لِّمَنِ الْمُلْكُ الْيَوْمَ لِلَّهِ الْوَاحِدِ الْقَهَّارِ (١٦) الْيَوْمَ تُجْزَى كُلُّ نَفْسٍ بِمَا كَسَبَتْ
لَا ظُلْمَ الْيَوْمَ إِنَّ اللهَ سَرِيعُ الْحِسَابِ (١٧) وَأَنذِرْهُمْ يَوْمَ الْآزِفَةِ إِذِ الْقُلُوبُ لَدَى الْحَنَاجِرِ
كَاظِمِينَ مَا لِلظَّالِمِينَ مِنْ حَمِيمٍ وَلَا شَفِيعٍ يُطَاعُ (١٨) يَعْلَمُ خَائِنَةَ الْأَعْيُنِ وَمَا تُخْفِي
الصُّدُورُ (١٩) وَاللهُ يَقْضِي بِالْحَقِّ وَالَّذِينَ يَدْعُونَ مِن دُونِهِ لَا يَقْضُونَ بِشَيْءٍ إِنَّ اللهَ هُوَ
السَّمِيعُ الْبَصِيرُ (٢٠) أَوَ لَمْ يَسِيرُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ فَيَنظُرُوا كَيْفَ كَانَ عَاقِبَةُ الَّذِينَ كَانُوا مِن
قَبْلِهِمْ كَانُوا هُمْ أَشَدَّ مِنْهُمْ قُوَّةً وَآثَارًا فِي الْأَرْضِ فَأَخَذَهُمُ اللهُ بِذُنُوبِهِمْ وَمَا كَانَ لَهُم مِّنَ
اللهِ مِن وَاقٍ (٢١) ذَلِكَ بِأَنَّهُمْ كَانَت تَّأْتِيهِمْ رُسُلُهُم بِالْبَيِّنَاتِ فَكَفَرُوا فَأَخَذَهُمُ اللهُ إِنَّهُ
قَوِيٌّ شَدِيدُ الْعِقَابِ (٢٢)

In the name of God, the Most Gracious, the Ever Merciful.

This is Hā Mīm. The revelation of this Book is from God, the Mighty One, the All-Knowing, Who forgives sins, accepts repentance, is stern in punishment and is very powerful. There is no god but Him. To Him is the return. (1-3)

None but those who deny reward and punishment are indulging in frivolous talk regarding the revelations of God. So let not their unchecked rambling in the land deceive you. Before them, the people of Noah denied, and so did the factions after them. And each community planned to lay hands on their messenger and indulged in frivolous talk through falsehood in order to defeat the truth; but I smote them, and how stern was My punishment! Thus shall the word of your Lord has been fulfilled concerning those who have committed disbelief; they are about to enter Hell. (4-6)

Those who bear the Throne and those who stand around it give glory to their Lord while celebrating His praises and believe in Him. And they implore forgiveness for those who have embraced faith, saying: “Lord, Your mercy and your knowledge embrace all things; so forgive those who repent and follow Your path and shield them from the punishment of Hell. And our Lord! Admit them to eternal gardens of Eden which You have promised them; and also those from among their forefathers, spouses and progeny who are worthy of Paradise. Indeed, You are the Mighty, the Wise One. And shield them from the evil consequences of deeds and those whom You shielded on that day from the evil consequences of deeds are ones whom You had mercy on. And this is indeed supreme triumph. (7-9)

And it will be proclaimed to the disbelievers: “God’s aversion to you has remained much greater than the aversion you have now to yourselves

when you would be called to embrace faith, but you would commit disbelief." They shall say: "Lord, twice have You gave us death and twice you gave us life; hence we now confess our sins; so is there any way out from here?" This fate came before you because when you were called to the one and only God, you would deny it; and if partners were associated with Him, you believed in them. So now the judgment rests with God alone, the Most High, the Supreme One.' (10-12)

It is He who shows His signs to you, and sends down sustenance from the sky for you. Yet none take heed except the attentive. So call God alone with true obedience to Him, however much the disbelievers may dislike it. Exalted is He, Master of the throne. He sends the spirit which is among His matters to whomsoever servant He chooses so that He may warn them of the day of meeting; the day when they shall be totally exposed before their Lord. None of their things will be hidden from God. Who shall reign supreme today? God, the One, the Almighty. Today every soul shall be recompensed according to what it did. Today no injustice shall take place. Swift indeed is God's reckoning. (13-17)

And forewarn them of the approaching calamity when hearts will get stuck in the throats and they will be choked with sorrow. On that day, neither will be there any sympathizer for the wrongdoers nor any intercessor whose pleading shall be heard. He knows the furtive look and the secrets also which hearts conceal. And God will judge with fairness. And those whom they invoke besides God will judge nothing. God alone hears all and observes all. (18-20)

Have these people never journeyed through the land so that they could have seen the fate of those who have gone before them. They were far greater than them in prowess and in the signs which they have left in the earth. Thus God seized them for their sins, and none could save them from His grasp. This was because their messengers would come to them with open signs and they denied them. So God seized them. Indeed, He is Mighty and stern retribution. (21-22)

Explanation

حم (١) تَنزِيلُ الْكِتَابِ مِنَ اللهِ الْعَزِيزِ الْعَلِيمِ (٢) غَافِرِ الذَّنبِ وَقَابِلِ التَّوْبِ شَدِيدِ الْعِقَابِ ذِي الطَّوْلِ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ إِلَيْهِ الْمَصِيرُ (٣)[1]

Ḥām Mīm is the Qur'ānic name of this *sūrah*. A detailed discussion on

1. This is Hā Mīm. The revelation of this Book is from God, the Mighty One, the All-Knowing, Who forgives sins, accepts repentance, is stern in punishment and is very powerful. There is no god but Him. To Him is the return.

the abbreviated letters was done at the beginning of Sūrah Baqarah. Here, this much needs to be kept in mind that this *sūrah* and all the rest after it found in this group share this name and the mood of each one of them is also the same.

The words تَنزِيلُ الْكِتَابِ مِنَ اللهِ الْعَزِيزِ الْعَلِيمِ portray a favour as well as sound an admonition to the opponents of the Qur'ān. The implication is that if the Almighty has revealed this Book with such a thorough and elaborate arrangement, then the purpose is that people should give it due importance, receive guidance from it and be grateful for this thorough arrangement of the Almighty for providing them guidance. Otherwise, they should remember that He is Mighty (عَزِيز) as well as All-Knowing (عَلِيم). Since He is Mighty, He has power and control over everything; He can give all kinds of punishment both in this world and in the next to the opponents of the Qur'ān and no one can stop Him from this. Besides being Mighty, He is also All-knowing; Hence, He fully knows which phase is the tussle that has ensued because of the elaborate revelation of this Book; He also knows the way those people who are presenting this Book are being treated as well as the intentions of those who are at the forefront of opposing it; He is also aware where these intentions have reached and when it is essential to stop them. In other words, this Book is not the request of a petitioner; it is a scripture of guidance revealed by the Mighty and All-Knowing God; hence, siding by it carries a lot of significance and opposing it also carries severe and far reaching consequences.

God has mentioned His attributes in the words غَافِرِ الذَّنبِ وَقَابِلِ التَّوْبِ شَدِيدِ الْعِقَابِ ذِي الطَّوْلِ: He is one Who forgives, accepts repentance, is stern in retribution and is also Mighty. The word طَّوْل means "blessing, self-sufficience, might and gift." I have preferred the meaning of "might" keeping view the contrasting style found in the verse.

The implication is that God has both these types of attributes and vested in Him are both types of authority. So it is up to everyone to decide his course of action: he can either accept this Book and expect to be forgiven by God's mercy or oppose it and wait for His punishment and power to manifest themselves.

The words لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ إِلَيْهِ الْمَصِيرُ refer to the fact that if anyone is in the misconception that there is someone other than God who is worthy of worship then he should remove this misconception. No once except God is worthy of worship. On the Day of Judgement, everyone shall return to Him, and all their matters shall be decided by Him. Neither will this

return be to anyone else nor will anyone else intercede without God's permission.

مَا يُجَادِلُ فِي آيَاتِ اللهِ إِلَّا الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا فَلَا يَغْرُرْكَ تَقَلُّبُهُمْ فِي الْبِلَادِ (٤)[2]

The expression آيَاتِ اللهِ refers to the verses of the Book whose revelation is referred to in verse two. By referring it to as آيَاتِ اللهِ its aspect of being a conclusive argument is highlighted.

The words الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا refer to those people who had denied the punishment which the Qur'ān was informing them of. It is mentioned at a number of instances in the Qur'ān that when the messengers of God warned them of God's punishment they regarded it to be a bluff and on the basis of their worldly successes rejected this warning and made fun of it.

This verse refers to this aspect. It assures the Prophet (sws) and through him the Muslims that the frivolous talk people are engaging in while opposing the Qur'ān are the ones who have rejected its warnings of punishment. It is weighing down heavily on their conceit that if they reject this Book and the one to whom it was revealed some punishment will visit them. Because of their arrogance and haughtiness they do not want to accept this fact and since they find themselves to be successful and affluent in life they make fun of it; however, no one should be misled by their current affluence: history bears witness that there were many a nation which the Almighty seized at their peaks and they could not save themselves.

Though the words فَلَا يَغْرُرْكَ تَقَلُّبُهُمْ فِي الْبِلَادِ apparently address the Prophet (sws) yet the rebuke and anger found in them is directed at the rejecters of the Quraysh who inebriated with the pride of their power and authority were not unable to understand that a punishment can visit them. The repeated warnings of the Qur'ān only made them wonder that why would they be punished and from where would this punishment come.

The word يَغْرُرْكَ means "walking about and coming and going freely." Occasion can also incorporate the meaning of arrogance and conceit in it. I have tried to keep this aspect in consideration.

كَذَّبَتْ قَبْلَهُمْ قَوْمُ نُوحٍ وَالْأَحْزَابُ مِن بَعْدِهِمْ وَهَمَّتْ كُلُّ أُمَّةٍ بِرَسُولِهِمْ لِيَأْخُذُوهُ وَجَادَلُوا

2. None but those who deny reward and punishment are indulging in frivolous talk regarding the revelations of God. So let not their unchecked rambling in the land deceive you.

بِالْبَاطِلِ لِيُدْحِضُوا بِهِ الْحَقَّ فَأَخَذْتُهُمْ فَكَيْفَ كَانَ عِقَابِ (٥)[3]

This verse presents historical evidence on what is said in the previous verse: before these Quraysh, first the people of Noah (sws) and then subsequent nations (reference being to the people of 'Ād and the Thamūd etc) also denied their respective messengers and each nation wanted to lay their hands on its messenger and tried to defeat his cause through their frivolous talk; however, before they could seize their messenger, they were seized by God and what a stern manner did He seize them in. This is an evident of God's attribute شَدِيد العِقَاب (stern in retribution) and the purpose of using the word عِقَاب here to connote punishment is to point that God sends His punishment to such rebellious people is because of a natural consequence of their deeds; it is certainly no injustice or oppression to them. Hence, one should learn a lesson from their fate; but they are certainly not worthy of sympathy.

This verse indicates that this sūrah was revealed at the time when the leaders of the Quraysh were consulting one another to lay their hands on the Prophet (sws). The Qur'ān has informed them that if they have such intentions, they should fully contemplate its consequences. The assurance found in this verse for the Prophet (sws) and his companions does not need any elaboration.

وَكَذَلِكَ حَقَّتْ كَلِمَتُ رَبِّكَ عَلَى الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا أَنَّهُمْ أَصْحَابُ النَّارِ (٦)[4]

The expression كَلِمَتُ رَبِّكَ refers to the كلمة العذاب mentioned in verse seventy one of Sūrah Zumar earlier, ie the overall decision of the Almighty that He communicated in response to the challenge of Satan. This decision was that those who while leaving the path of God follow Satan shall all be gathered in Hell. The verse under discussion says that just as this decision of God was fulfilled for the previous nations, it has also been fulfilled for these disbelievers of the Quraysh and they too shall be cast into Hell. In other words, the Prophet (sws) is directed to carry out his obligation; whatever fate has been ordained for these people shall be encountered by them. Since the punishment of God is the first

3. Before them, the people of Noah denied, and so did the factions after them. And each community planned to lay hands on their messenger and indulged in frivolous talk through falsehood in order to defeat the truth; but I smote them, and how stern was My punishment!

4. Thus shall the word of your Lord has been fulfilled concerning those who have committed disbelief; they are about to enter Hell.

step to Hell, hence this punishment is signified by the word Hell.

الَّذِينَ يَحْمِلُونَ الْعَرْشَ وَمَنْ حَوْلَهُ يُسَبِّحُونَ بِحَمْدِ رَبِّهِمْ وَيُؤْمِنُونَ بِهِ وَيَسْتَغْفِرُونَ لِلَّذِينَ آمَنُوا رَبَّنَا وَسِعْتَ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ رَّحْمَةً وَعِلْمًا فَاغْفِرْ لِلَّذِينَ تَابُوا وَاتَّبَعُوا سَبِيلَكَ وَقِهِمْ عَذَابَ الْجَحِيمِ (٧) رَبَّنَا وَأَدْخِلْهُمْ جَنَّاتِ عَدْنٍ الَّتِي وَعَدتَّهُم وَمَن صَلَحَ مِنْ آبَائِهِمْ وَأَزْوَاجِهِمْ وَذُرِّيَّاتِهِمْ إِنَّكَ أَنتَ الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ (٨) وَقِهِمُ السَّيِّئَاتِ وَمَن تَقِ السَّيِّئَاتِ يَوْمَئِذٍ فَقَدْ رَحِمْتَهُ وَذَلِكَ هُوَ الْفَوْزُ الْعَظِيمُ (٩)[5]

These verses state that if these people depend on the recommendations of the angels and on its basis are denying the warnings of the Prophet (sws), then they should listen up: even the favoured angels of God who lift His throne continue to remain fearful and afraid of Him and remain busy in extolling Him and celebrating His praises; so one can only imagine of the rest of the angels.

The words وَيُؤْمِنُونَ بِهِ point to the fact that these angles are not inflicted with the claim of divinity; on the contrary, like the servants of God profess faith in Him.

Similar, the words وَيَسْتَغْفِرُونَ لِلَّذِينَ آمَنُوا highlight the fact that these angles continue to seek repentance for people who profess faith in God so that God may shield them from the punishment of this world and the next. In other words, this seeking of forgiveness by them is their recommendation and is reserved for the believers.

This state of fear of the angels and their seeking forgiveness for the believers can be seen in the last verse of the previous *sūrah* and occurs in Sūrah Shūrā as well in the following words:

تَكَادُ السَّمَاوَاتُ يَتَفَطَّرْنَ مِن فَوْقِهِنَّ وَالْمَلَائِكَةُ يُسَبِّحُونَ بِحَمْدِ رَبِّهِمْ

5. Those who bear the Throne and those who stand around it give glory to their Lord while celebrating His praises and believe in Him. And they implore forgiveness for those who have embraced faith, saying: "Lord, Your mercy and your knowledge embrace all things; so forgive those who repent and follow Your path and shield them from the punishment of Hell. And our Lord! Admit them to eternal gardens of Eden which You have promised them; and also those from among their forefathers, spouses and progeny who are worthy of Paradise. Indeed, You are the Mighty, the Wise One. And shield them from the evil consequences of deeds and those whom You shielded on that day from the evil consequences of deeds are ones whom You had mercy on. And this is indeed supreme triumph.

وَيَسْتَغْفِرُونَ لِمَن فِي الْأَرْضِ (٤٢: ٥)

The heavens are almost ripping apart from above, and the angels glorify the name of their Lord celebrating His praise, and seek repentance for the inhabitants of the earth. (42:5)

The purpose of mentioning this state of fear of the angels is to inform people who think that so favoured are they to God and so much influence do they have on Him that they will not allow their worshippers to be seized by God come what may; they should remain informed that the angels are not inflicted with any such conceited notion; on the contrary, they are in a perpetual state of submission to God and seek refuge from His anger and wrath.

The words رَبَّنَا وَسِعْتَ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ رَّحْمَةً وَعِلْمًا فَاغْفِرْ لِلَّذِينَ تَابُوا وَاتَّبَعُوا سَبِيلَكَ وَقِهِمْ عَذَابَ الْجَحِيمِ explain the seeking of forgiveness by the angels: they do not speak to their Lord as if they have some say in matters under His jurisdiction; on the contrary, they consign every matter to the mercy and knowledge of God because both are so profound that they embrace everything; for this reason, the Almighty will deal with each person according to the requisites of His mercy and knowledge. With this belief they request forgiveness for those people who repent from their sins and after reforming themselves follow the path of God. In other words, the angels continue to pray and advocate but this prayer and advocacy is reserved for those who repent from their evil beliefs and practices belonging to the *jāhiliyyah* period and become followers of the path of God. This is not for those who are the enemies of the Messenger and his religion.

The words رَبَّنَا وَأَدْخِلْهُمْ جَنَّاتِ عَدْنٍ الَّتِي وَعَدتَّهُم وَمَن صَلَحَ مِنْ آبَائِهِمْ وَأَزْوَاجِهِمْ وَذُرِّيَّاتِهِمْ إِنَّكَ أَنتَ الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ further explain this seeking of forgiveness by the angels: they pray that such people be granted Paradise who become worthy of it by repenting and reforming themselves and for whom God has promised Paradise. Moreover, these angels pray for only those among the forefathers, wives and progeny of the believers who become worthy of it by repenting and reforming themselves. What is implied in other words is that Paradise is not something which will be bestowed on someone merely because of one's relationship to someone or because of one's family or lineage; on the contrary, only those people will enter it who deserve it and who earn the blessings of the Almighty.

The sentence إِنَّكَ أَنتَ الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ is an expression of intercession which is also cited through the tongue of Jesus (sws) in verse 120 of Sūrah

Mā'idah. It has been explained there. These words consign matters to God: He can do whatever He wants to; however, since God is also wise, He will only do that which is based on His wisdom and justice. This seeking of forgiveness by the angels is in fact their recommendation for the inhabitants of the earth, and its nature is the one which the Qur'ān has stated and not one what these ignorant people have understood.

In وَقِهِمُ السَّيِّئَاتِ وَمَن تَقِ السَّيِّئَاتِ يَوْمَئِذٍ فَقَدْ رَحِمْتَهُ وَذَلِكَ هُوَ الْفَوْزُ الْعَظِيمُ the word السَّيِّئَاتِ (sins) refers to its consequences. To convey the outcome of an action, at times, a verb is used to connote its consequence. In other words, the angels pray to God to protect the believers from the evil consequences of their sins ie brush away their sins so that they are protected from their evil.

The words وَمَن تَقِ السَّيِّئَاتِ يَوْمَئِذٍ فَقَدْ رَحِمْتَهُ وَذَلِكَ هُوَ الْفَوْزُ الْعَظِيمُ of angels point to the dreadful nature of the Day of Accountability. To them, the real fortunate are people whom the Almighty protected from the consequences of their sins; this to them is the greatest success and the real fortunate are the ones who achieve this success.

As referred to earlier, the purpose of mentioning this seeking of forgiveness by the angels is to explain that they continuously present their recommendations to God in favour of the believers; however, the nature of this recommendation is the one stated and not the one on the basis of which people have become unafraid of the Hereafter, and when they are reminded of the actual reality they are impelled to debate and confrontation.

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا يُنَادَوْنَ لَمَقْتُ اللهِ أَكْبَرُ مِن مَّقْتِكُمْ أَنفُسَكُمْ إِذْ تُدْعَوْنَ إِلَى الْإِيمَانِ فَتَكْفُرُونَ (١٠)[6]

This verse implies that people have pinned their hopes on their recommenders who they think will secure for them the highest place before God; however, in the Hereafter, they will be informed by a proclamation that the extent of wrath and anger the Almighty had on them when they would be called through the messengers and they would arrogantly reject it would be much more than the sorrow and anger they will have at that time on their misfortune and deprivation and on the crooked thoughts and erroneous state of their leaders. The implication is

6. And it will be proclaimed to the disbelievers: "God's aversion to you has remained much greater than the aversion you have now to your selves when you would be called to embrace faith, but you would commit disbelief."

that they will now have to bear the consequences of their arrogance and of the wrath and anger of God and mourn their misfortune. No one is now present to help them. Whatever has come before them has come after the truth has been conclusively conveyed to them from the Almighty; they deserve only this.

The words إِذْ تُدْعَوْنَ إِلَى الْإِيمَانِ are the locus of لَمَقْتُ اللهِ أَكْبَرُ. Faith here specially refers to faith in *tawḥīd*. This is because only that faith is acceptable to God which exists with *tawḥīd*. It has been stated in the forty fifth verse of Sūrah Zumar that the greatest aversion which the rejecters have is for the call of *tawḥīd*. In this *sūrah* too, it has been explained in verse twelve ahead that this anger of God on them would be because when they were called to *tawḥīd*, they showed aversion to it and fondly accepted *shirk* (polytheism).

قَالُوا رَبَّنَا أَمَتَّنَا اثْنَتَيْنِ وَأَحْيَيْتَنَا اثْنَتَيْنِ فَاعْتَرَفْنَا بِذُنُوبِنَا فَهَلْ إِلَى خُرُوجٍ مِّن سَبِيلٍ (١١)[7]

On the Day of Judgement, these people will very obediently and clearly acknowledge their sins. They would say that they did think that raising the dead back to life was something impossible and for this reason while being fearless of accountability they made fun of His messenger and His call; they would go on to say that now that after the Almighty has given them death twice and life also twice and thus made them clearly observe life after death, is there a way out from Hell so that they can go afresh to the previous world and lead a life of faith and righteous deeds? Twice giving death refers first to the state in which human beings were before this world was created and second to the death which every living person is destined to face. Similarly, twice giving life refers first to the life of this world and second to the life of the next world.

ذَلِكُم بِأَنَّهُ إِذَا دُعِيَ اللهُ وَحْدَهُ كَفَرْتُمْ وَإِن يُشْرَكْ بِهِ تُؤْمِنُوا فَالْحُكْمُ لِلَّهِ الْعَلِيِّ الْكَبِيرِ (١٢)[8]

This verse alludes to the answer which will be given to these people by the Almighty: whatever they have encountered was the result of their stubbornness and obduracy; when they were called to *tawḥīd*, they would run away from it and remain ardent supporters of *shirk*; so now the

7. They shall say: "Lord, twice have You gave us death and twice you gave us life; hence we now confess our sins; so is there any way out from here?"

8. This fate came before you because when you were called to the one and only God, you would deny it; and if partners were associated with Him, you believed in them. So now the judgment rests with God alone, the Most High, the Supreme One.'

decision rests with the Almighty and this decision is nothing but what they are now facing.

هُوَ الَّذِي يُرِيكُمْ آيَاتِهِ وَيُنَزِّلُ لَكُم مِّنَ السَّمَاء رِزْقًا وَمَا يَتَذَكَّرُ إِلَّا مَن يُنِيبُ (١٣)[9]

The verse implies that the both mercy and calamity are in His hands. Hence one should fear Him alone and pin hopes in Him only. He keeps showing both these aspects of His might. It is He Who makes us observe thunder and lightning in the sky and it is He alone Who sends down rain that opens all doors of sustenance and blessings of the earth. This is a clear proof of the fact that both the heavens and the earth are in the control of one God. The thunder of punishment is in His hands and so are the treasures of sustenance and nutrition.

The words وَمَا يَتَذَكَّرُ إِلَّا مَن يُنِيبُ imply that both these facets of God keep manifesting themselves to remind and instruct people; however, benefiting from them depends on the fact that a person is inclined to observe them and also has a discerning mind. If a person becomes so blind in following his desires that he does not have the courage to look at other things and learn a lesson from them, then the greatest of signs cannot open the eyes of such a person.

فَادْعُوا اللَّهَ مُخْلِصِينَ لَهُ الدِّينَ وَلَوْ كَرِهَ الْكَافِرُونَ (١٤)[10]

This verse addresses the Muslims. It says that if these Idolaters are not prepared to open their eyes and show aversion to the belief of *tawḥīd* presented to them by the Muslims and fight with them, then they should now not show any concern to them; in contrast to them, Muslims should only call upon God without associating anyone with them and worship Him with purity of obedience.

رَفِيعُ الدَّرَجَاتِ ذُو الْعَرْشِ يُلْقِي الرُّوحَ مِنْ أَمْرِهِ عَلَى مَن يَشَاء مِنْ عِبَادِهِ لِيُنذِرَ يَوْمَ التَّلَاقِ (١٥)[11]

The Almighty has an exalted status and is the master of the throne that

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9. It is He who shows His signs to you, and sends down sustenance from the sky for you. Yet none take heed except the attentive.

10. So call God alone with true obedience to Him, however much the disbelievers may dislike it.

11. Exalted is He, Master of the throne. He sends the spirit which is among His matters to whomsoever servant He chooses so that He may warn them of the day of meeting.

governs all the universe. No one can access Him. The deities whom these Idolaters have regarded as His associates and favoured ones have only been invented by them and have no basis. The court of God is beyond the access of all.

The word الرُّوح in يُلْقِي الرُّوحَ مِنْ أَمْرِهِ عَلَى مَـن يَـشَاء مِـنْ عِبَـادِهِ here connotes "divine revelation". The reason why divine revelation is signified by this word is obvious: just as the spirit (رُّوح) gives life to the body, in a similar manner divine revelation gives life, warmth and light to the heart and intellect. Jesus (sws) has referred to this fact in the following words: "Man does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God," (Matthew, 4:4). The attribute مِـنْ أَمْـرِهِ highlights the fact that this divine revelation is from among the matters of God whose full nature and form cannot be understood by every person. Only he understands it who sends it or he who experiences it. This fact is explained at another place in the following words: وَيَـسْأَلُوْنَكَ عَـنِ الـرُّوْحِ قُـلِ الرُّوْحُ مِنْ أَمْرِ رَبِّيْ وَمَآ أُوتِيْتُمْ مِّنَ الْعِلْـمِ إِلاَّ قَلِـيْلاً (١٧:٨٥) (And they ask you about *al-rūḥ*. Tell them: "This *al-rūḥ* is from among my Lord's command. Little indeed is the knowledge given to you," (17:85)). Readers may look my explanation of the above cited verses.

The purpose of the words of the verse under discussion is that the exalted and lofty presence of the Almighty cannot be accessed by any man or jinn so that they may be able to be informed of some of its secret. The only way through which His will can be known is divine revelation which he sends to those among His servants who He selects for this special purpose. In other words, the means which these Idolaters have invented to eavesdrop on the secrets of the unknown are absolutely baseless. The only way to know of God's likes and dislikes is divine revelation, which the Almighty sends down to His messengers yet these wretched people have become enemies of the Qur'ān and its presenter. Their over-weaning pride has led them to conclude that if God was to make someone as His messenger, he should have been from among them. They do not know that God selects for this position whomsoever He wants, and the one He selects really deserves to be selected; not every claimant is worthy of it.

In لِيُنـذِرَ يَـوْمَ التَّـلَاقِ the expression يَـوْمَ التَّـلَاقِ refers to the Day of Judgement because on that Day everyone is to appear before their Lord. The real purpose of divine revelation and prophethood is to inform people of this day. This is the real issue which needs to be understood. If it is understood, the door to understand all other issues is opened. If this is not understood, a person cannot take a single step in the right

direction. So the real mission of the messengers of God is to guide people to this destination.

يَوْمَ هُم بَارِزُونَ لَا يَخْفَى عَلَى اللهِ مِنْهُمْ شَيْءٌ لِّمَنِ الْمُلْكُ الْيَوْمَ لِلّٰهِ الْوَاحِدِ الْقَهَّارِ (١٦)[12]

The inner and outer self of every person will be exposed before God on that day. Nothing will remain hidden from God so that any witness or evidence is needed or that someone may tell a lie or hide any of his blemishes or wrongly justify it or present a false recommendation for it.

On that day, when everyone will be totally exposed and helpless before God, people will be addressed by the words لِّمَنِ الْمُلْكُ الْيَوْمَ (Speak up! To whom belongs the sovereignty today). Where are those intercessors and deities which these Idolaters had set up as partners of God and thought that they would save them from God?

Since they will have no answer to give at that time, the Qur'ān gave the answer itself by the words: لِلّٰهِ الْوَاحِدِ الْقَهَّارِ (Today sovereignty belongs to God alone, the One the Almighty). At that time no one will be able to be a friend to another nor be able to change a decision of God. I have already presented my research on the word قَهَّار at an appropriate place of this *tafsīr*.

الْيَوْمَ تُجْزَى كُلُّ نَفْسٍ بِمَا كَسَبَتْ لَا ظُلْمَ الْيَوْمَ إِنَّ اللهَ سَرِيعُ الْحِسَابِ (١٧)[13]

The verse implies: today is the day when the justice of the Almighty will completely manifest itself; today everyone will be rewarded or punished according to his deeds; none will be wronged or treated unjustly and all this will happen in the blink of an eye; no one should wrongly conceive that this will take a lot of time; God is very quick in taking account.

وَأَنذِرْهُمْ يَوْمَ الْآزِفَةِ إِذِ الْقُلُوبُ لَدَى الْحَنَاجِرِ كَاظِمِينَ مَا لِلظَّالِمِينَ مِنْ حَمِيمٍ وَلَا شَفِيعٍ يُطَاعُ (١٨)[14]

The word الْآزِفَة means "that which has come near." Here it is used for

12. The day when they shall be totally exposed before their Lord. None of their things will be hidden from God. Who shall reign supreme today? God, the One, the Almighty.

13. Today every soul shall be recompensed according to what it did. Today no injustice shall take place. Swift indeed is God's reckoning.

14. And forewarn them of the approaching calamity when hearts will get stuck in the throats and they will be choked with sorrow. On that day; neither will be there any sympathizer for the wrongdoers nor any intercessor whose pleading shall be heard.

the Day of Judgement. The reason for using this attribute of this Day is that people should not think that it is far off; it is very near as is depicted in the following narrative: مَنْ مَاتَ فَقَدْ قَامَتْ قِيَامَتُهُ (he who dies, his day of judgement has arrived).[15] On the Day of Judgement, no one will be able to feel the time which has to lapsed between him and the arrival of its time; each person will think that he had just slept a while ago and now woken up. In other words, this would mean that the time that is left for the Day of Judgement of a person is the time of his life that he is to spend in this world; just as each person's death stands close by, similarly, the Day of Judgement too is at hand.

Another aspect of the word الْآزِفَة is that a nation to whom a messenger is sent faces the verdict of the court of God; if the nation denies the messenger, then it is necessarily destroyed; this destruction is like a lesser day of judgement which is like a prelude to the greater day of judgement. Thus this word is meant to admonish the Quraysh that they should not regard the Day of Judgement to be far off; its court is about to be set up; it will soon deliver its verdict; at the same time, they should wait for the court of the final day which will give a final verdict in all matters.

The words إِذِ الْقُلُوبُ لَدَى الْحَنَاجِرِ كَاظِمِينَ مَا لِلظَّالِمِينَ مِنْ حَمِيمٍ وَلَا شَفِيعٍ يُطَاعُ depict the horrific nature of the Day: it will be as if the hearts of the sinners have reached their throats, and they will be stricken with grief and sorrow; neither will voice come out from the throat of a person to defend him nor will they have any sympathizer or recommender who can utter a word in their support.

The word شَفِيعٍ is qualified by the adjective: يُطَاعُ to refute a claim of the Idolaters. They thought that their deities were so dear and near to God that to pamper and cajole them He would necessarily accept what they ask for. This word implies that these people will have no recommender on that day who has any say.

يَعْلَمُ خَائِنَةَ الْأَعْيُنِ وَمَا تُخْفِي الصُّدُورُ (١٩)[16]

Any recommendation in favour of someone can only be effective for someone who is not aware of the whole situation himself. The Almighty is aware of every small or big secret of every individual; He even has knowledge of furtive glances and secrets hidden in the hearts; so how can a recommendation have any weight before Him.

15. See, for example: Ibn 'Asākir, *Tārīkh Madīnah Dimashq*, vol. 37, 214.
16. He knows the furtive look and the secrets also which hearts conceal.

وَاللَّهُ يَقْضِي بِالْحَقِّ وَالَّذِينَ يَدْعُونَ مِن دُونِهِ لَا يَقْضُونَ بِشَيْءٍ إِنَّ اللَّهَ هُوَ السَّمِيعُ الْبَصِيرُ (٢٠)[17]

As far as this is concerned that a recommendation can turn a falsehood into truth and vice versa, then there is no possibility of this either. Every decision of God will be according to the truth and no one through his intercession or recommendation can turn God's just decision into an unjust one.

The words وَالَّذِينَ يَدْعُونَ مِن دُونِهِ لَا يَقْضُونَ بِشَيْءٍ imply that as far as the baseless as the false deities of the Idolaters are concerned, they will not have any authority whatsoever to decide any thing so that they would be able to speak against or in defence of someone.

The words إِنَّ اللَّهَ هُوَ السَّمِيعُ الْبَصِيرُ substantiate what is said above: when the being who really sees and hears is God, who else can have the right to made a judgement, and when sees and hears all, how is it possible that a person through his recommendation can deceive Him and lead Him to make a wrong judgement. Moreover, these false deities can neither see nor hear; so on what basis is it understood that they too will be able to judge in any matter of a person.

أَوَ لَمْ يَسِيرُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ فَيَنظُرُوا كَيْفَ كَانَ عَاقِبَةُ الَّذِينَ كَانُوا مِن قَبْلِهِمْ كَانُوا هُمْ أَشَدَّ مِنْهُمْ قُوَّةً وَآثَارًا فِي الْأَرْضِ فَأَخَذَهُمُ اللَّهُ بِذُنُوبِهِمْ وَمَا كَانَ لَهُم مِّنَ اللَّهِ مِن وَاقٍ (٢١)[18]

This is a threat in unequivocal words to the Quraysh: if they are being so audacious enough to reject the warnings of the Prophet (sws), have they never journeyed through this land to see the fate met by their predecessor nations – who were much stronger and mightier than they and were also superior to them in their feats of constructing structures and in their culture and civilization? However, when the Almighty seized them in retribution of their sins, neither did their power and numerical strength could be of any avail to them nor did their advancements in architecture and civilization could be of any benefit to them nor did their

17. And God will judge with fairness. And those whom they invoke besides God will judge nothing. God alone hears all and observes all.

18. Have these people never journeyed through the land so that they could have seen the fate of those who have gone before them. They were far greater than them in prowess and in the signs which they have left in the earth. Thus God seized them for their sins, and none could save them from His grasp.

idols and deities which they regarded as their supporters and helpers could protect them. This reference is to the people of the 'Ād, Thamūd and Madyan etc the details of whose power, numerical strength and architectural and cultural feats have been seen in the previous *sūrahs*.

Here, the word أَشَدّ also encompasses the meaning of أَعْظَم (greater) and أَكْثَر (more in number). For this reason, a mention of آثَارًا with قُوَّةً is very appropriate. The word آثَارًا refers to signs related to cultural advancements and architectural feats. It is these signs which are always regarded by the world to be marks of majesty and grandeur of nations. However, it is evident from the Qur'ān that if a nation is devoid of faith, then these signs become manifestations of its downfall and decadence and ultimately these signs become tombs of its collective existence.

ذَلِكَ بِأَنَّهُمْ كَانَت تَّأْتِيهِمْ رُسُلُهُم بِالْبَيِّنَاتِ فَكَفَرُوا فَأَخَذَهُمُ اللهُ إِنَّهُ قَوِيٌّ شَدِيدُ الْعِقَابِ (٢٢)[19]

This is a delineation of the reason for the destruction of these nations: the messengers of God came to them with very clear signs; however, inebriated with their power and strength and worldly successes they did not pay any heed to the warnings sounded by their respective messenger. Finally, they were seized by the Almighty and when this happened they could not set themselves free from His grasp. God is powerful and stern in retribution. No technique or method can avail a person when He is seized by God.

Section II: Verses (23-55)

In this section, the anecdote of Moses (rta) and the Pharaoh is narrated. The purpose of citing it is to substantiate the claim mentioned in the previous verse: when a messenger is sent to a nation and it denies him, then it is necessarily destroyed however much it may be superior with regard to His majesty, grandeur and architectural feats and cultural advancements. This anecdote is meant to assure the Prophet (sws) and his companions; they should exercise patience and continue to carry out their obligation; the leaders and chiefs of the Quraysh too will meet this fate if they do not mend their ways. At the same time, the tale of a

19. This was because their messengers would come to them with open signs and they denied them. So God seized them. Indeed, He is Mighty and stern retribution.

member of the Pharaoh's family who was a true believer is also narrated. For a long period of time, he hid his faith due to the circumstances he was facing; however, when he saw that Moses (sws) and his preaching were facing a decisive and final danger, he came out in the open and went all out to support Moses (sws).

The lessons hidden in the anecdote of this true believer will be explained in the exegesis of the respective verses. Here some of its important aspects need to be kept in mind:

This anecdote has been recounted before the leaders of the Quraysh to inform them that true sincerity for one's nation is the one shown by this true believer and not one which they conceitedly think. When he saw that his nation was treading the path of doom, he while rising above all his personal interests endangered his own self by coming forward and attempting to stop it from this fateful behaviour. On the other hand, the leaders of the Quraysh are spending all their strength to push their nation to the punishment of God.

People who as yet had hidden their faith because of some expediency were conveyed through this anecdote that in matters of faith expediency is considerable when the purpose is to protect faith and to make sure of the welfare of the Muslims. If the faith and the faithful face the decisive danger in this regard, then it is essential to throw away all expediencies and come out in the open much like what did this true believer did.

Weak and oppressed Muslims are taught and guided through this anecdote by informing them that those who endanger their lives for the cause of truth like this true believer will find God to be their helper and supporter.

Readers may now recite the coming verses in the light of this background.

Text and Translation

وَلَقَدْ أَرْسَلْنَا مُوسَى بِآيَاتِنَا وَسُلْطَانٍ مُّبِينٍ (٢٣) إِلَى فِرْعَوْنَ وَهَامَانَ وَقَارُونَ فَقَالُوا
سَاحِرٌ كَذَّابٌ (٢٤) فَلَمَّا جَاءهُم بِالْحَقِّ مِنْ عِندِنَا قَالُوا اقْتُلُوا أَبْنَاء الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا مَعَهُ
وَاسْتَحْيُوا نِسَاءهُمْ وَمَا كَيْدُ الْكَافِرِينَ إِلَّا فِي ضَلَالٍ (٢٥) وَقَالَ فِرْعَوْنُ ذَرُونِي أَقْتُلْ
مُوسَى وَلْيَدْعُ رَبَّهُ إِنِّي أَخَافُ أَن يُبَدِّلَ دِينَكُمْ أَوْ أَن يُظْهِرَ فِي الْأَرْضِ الْفَسَادَ (٢٦)
وَقَالَ مُوسَى إِنِّي عُذْتُ بِرَبِّي وَرَبِّكُم مِّن كُلِّ مُتَكَبِّرٍ لَّا يُؤْمِنُ بِيَوْمِ الْحِسَابِ (٢٧) وَقَالَ
رَجُلٌ مُّؤْمِنٌ مِّنْ آلِ فِرْعَوْنَ يَكْتُمُ إِيمَانَهُ أَتَقْتُلُونَ رَجُلًا أَن يَقُولَ رَبِّيَ اللَّهُ وَقَدْ جَاءكُم

بِالْبَيِّنَاتِ مِن رَّبِّكُمْ وَإِن يَكُ كَاذِبًا فَعَلَيْهِ كَذِبُهُ وَإِن يَكُ صَادِقًا يُصِبْكُم بَعْضُ الَّذِي
يَعِدُكُمْ إِنَّ اللهَ لَا يَهْدِي مَنْ هُوَ مُسْرِفٌ كَذَّابٌ (٢٨) يَا قَوْمِ لَكُمُ الْمُلْكُ الْيَوْمَ
ظَاهِرِينَ فِي الْأَرْضِ فَمَن يَنصُرُنَا مِن بَأْسِ اللهِ إِنْ جَاءنَا قَالَ فِرْعَوْنُ مَا أُرِيكُمْ إِلَّا مَا
أَرَى وَمَا أَهْدِيكُمْ إِلَّا سَبِيلَ الرَّشَادِ (٢٩) وَقَالَ الَّذِي آمَنَ يَا قَوْمِ إِنِّي أَخَافُ عَلَيْكُم
مِّثْلَ يَوْمِ الْأَحْزَابِ (٣٠) مِثْلَ دَأْبِ قَوْمِ نُوحٍ وَعَادٍ وَثَمُودَ وَالَّذِينَ مِن بَعْدِهِمْ وَمَا اللهُ يُرِيدُ
ظُلْمًا لِّلْعِبَادِ (٣١) وَيَا قَوْمِ إِنِّي أَخَافُ عَلَيْكُمْ يَوْمَ التَّنَادِ (٣٢) يَوْمَ تُوَلُّونَ مُدْبِرِينَ مَا
لَكُم مِّنَ اللهِ مِنْ عَاصِمٍ وَمَن يُضْلِلِ اللهُ فَمَا لَهُ مِنْ هَادٍ (٣٣) وَلَقَدْ جَاءكُمْ يُوسُفُ
مِن قَبْلُ بِالْبَيِّنَاتِ فَمَا زِلْتُمْ فِي شَكٍّ مِّمَّا جَاءكُم بِهِ حَتَّى إِذَا هَلَكَ قُلْتُمْ لَن يَبْعَثَ اللهُ
مِن بَعْدِهِ رَسُولًا كَذَلِكَ يُضِلُّ اللهُ مَنْ هُوَ مُسْرِفٌ مُّرْتَابٌ (٣٤) الَّذِينَ يُجَادِلُونَ فِي آيَاتِ
اللهِ بِغَيْرِ سُلْطَانٍ أَتَاهُمْ كَبُرَ مَقْتًا عِندَ اللهِ وَعِندَ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا كَذَلِكَ يَطْبَعُ اللهُ عَلَى كُلِّ
قَلْبِ مُتَكَبِّرٍ جَبَّارٍ (٣٥) وَقَالَ فِرْعَوْنُ يَا هَامَانُ ابْنِ لِي صَرْحًا لَّعَلِّي أَبْلُغُ الْأَسْبَابَ (٣٦)
أَسْبَابَ السَّمَاوَاتِ فَأَطَّلِعَ إِلَى إِلَهِ مُوسَى وَإِنِّي لَأَظُنُّهُ كَاذِبًا وَكَذَلِكَ زُيِّنَ لِفِرْعَوْنَ سُوءُ
عَمَلِهِ وَصُدَّ عَنِ السَّبِيلِ وَمَا كَيْدُ فِرْعَوْنَ إِلَّا فِي تَبَابٍ (٣٧) وَقَالَ الَّذِي آمَنَ يَا قَوْمِ
اتَّبِعُونِ أَهْدِكُمْ سَبِيلَ الرَّشَادِ (٣٨) يَا قَوْمِ إِنَّمَا هَذِهِ الْحَيَاةُ الدُّنْيَا مَتَاعٌ وَإِنَّ الْآخِرَةَ هِيَ
دَارُ الْقَرَارِ (٣٩) مَنْ عَمِلَ سَيِّئَةً فَلَا يُجْزَى إِلَّا مِثْلَهَا وَمَنْ عَمِلَ صَالِحًا مِّن ذَكَرٍ أَوْ أُنثَى
وَهُوَ مُؤْمِنٌ فَأُوْلَئِكَ يَدْخُلُونَ الْجَنَّةَ يُرْزَقُونَ فِيهَا بِغَيْرِ حِسَابٍ (٤٠) وَيَا قَوْمِ مَا لِي
أَدْعُوكُمْ إِلَى النَّجَاةِ وَتَدْعُونَنِي إِلَى النَّارِ (٤١) تَدْعُونَنِي لِأَكْفُرَ بِاللهِ وَأُشْرِكَ بِهِ مَا لَيْسَ لِي
بِهِ عِلْمٌ وَأَنَا أَدْعُوكُمْ إِلَى الْعَزِيزِ الْغَفَّارِ (٤٢) لَا جَرَمَ أَنَّمَا تَدْعُونَنِي إِلَيْهِ لَيْسَ لَهُ دَعْوَةٌ فِي
الدُّنْيَا وَلَا فِي الْآخِرَةِ وَأَنَّ مَرَدَّنَا إِلَى اللهِ وَأَنَّ الْمُسْرِفِينَ هُمْ أَصْحَابُ النَّارِ (٤٣)
فَسَتَذْكُرُونَ مَا أَقُولُ لَكُمْ وَأُفَوِّضُ أَمْرِي إِلَى اللهِ إِنَّ اللهَ بَصِيرٌ بِالْعِبَادِ (٤٤)

فَوَقَاهُ اللهُ سَيِّئَاتِ مَا مَكَرُوا وَحَاقَ بِآلِ فِرْعَوْنَ سُوءُ الْعَذَابِ (٤٥) النَّارُ يُعْرَضُونَ
عَلَيْهَا غُدُوًّا وَعَشِيًّا وَيَوْمَ تَقُومُ السَّاعَةُ أَدْخِلُوا آلَ فِرْعَوْنَ أَشَدَّ الْعَذَابِ (٤٦) وَإِذْ
يَتَحَاجُّونَ فِي النَّارِ فَيَقُولُ الضُّعَفَاء لِلَّذِينَ اسْتَكْبَرُوا إِنَّا كُنَّا لَكُمْ تَبَعًا فَهَلْ أَنتُم مُّغْنُونَ
عَنَّا نَصِيبًا مِّنَ النَّارِ (٤٧) قَالَ الَّذِينَ اسْتَكْبَرُوا إِنَّا كُلٌّ فِيهَا إِنَّ اللهَ قَدْ حَكَمَ بَيْنَ الْعِبَادِ

(٤٨) وَقَالَ الَّذِينَ فِي النَّارِ لِخَزَنَةِ جَهَنَّمَ ادْعُوا رَبَّكُمْ يُخَفِّفْ عَنَّا يَوْمًا مِّنَ الْعَذَابِ (٤٩)
قَالُوا أَوَلَمْ تَكُ تَأْتِيكُمْ رُسُلُكُم بِالْبَيِّنَاتِ قَالُوا بَلَى قَالُوا فَادْعُوا وَمَا دُعَاء الْكَافِرِينَ إِلَّا
فِي ضَلَالٍ (٥٠) إِنَّا لَنَنصُرُ رُسُلَنَا وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا فِي الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا وَيَوْمَ يَقُومُ الْأَشْهَادُ (٥١) يَوْمَ
لَا يَنفَعُ الظَّالِمِينَ مَعْذِرَتُهُمْ وَلَهُمُ اللَّعْنَةُ وَلَهُمْ سُوءُ الدَّارِ (٥٢) وَلَقَدْ آتَيْنَا مُوسَى الْهُدَى
وَأَوْرَثْنَا بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ الْكِتَابَ (٥٣) هُدًى وَذِكْرَى لِأُولِي الْأَلْبَابِ (٥٤) فَاصْبِرْ إِنَّ وَعْدَ
اللهِ حَقٌّ وَاسْتَغْفِرْ لِذَنبِكَ وَسَبِّحْ بِحَمْدِ رَبِّكَ بِالْعَشِيِّ وَالْإِبْكَارِ (٥٥)

And We sent forth Moses with Our signs and with a clear proof to Pharaoh, Hāmān, and Qarūn. But they said: "He is a sorcerer, a liar." And when he brought them the truth from Ourself, they said: "Slay the sons of those who share his faith, and spare only their women." And the ploy of these disbelievers ended up in futility. (23-25)

And the Pharaoh said: "Let me slay Moses, and then let him invoke his God! I fear that he might change your religion and spread rebellion in the land." Moses said: "I take refuge with my Lord and your Lord from the evil of every arrogant person who does not believe in the Day of Reckoning." (26-27)

But a believer from the Pharaoh's kinsmen, who had hidden his faith, said: "Would you slay a man merely because he says: 'my Lord is God?' even though he has also brought to you very clear signs from your Lord. And if he is lying, then its evil consequences will afflict none but him. And if he is speaking the truth, a part at least of what he is threatening you with will smite you. God will not let him succeed who is a blatant liar and a transgressor. O People of My Nation! Today sovereignty is with you and you are dominant in the land; but who will save us from the torment of God if it visits us?" The Pharaoh said: "I am informing you of my calculated opinion and am guiding you towards exactly the straight path." (28-29)

And he who had embraced faith said: "O People of My Nation! I fear the same punishment will befall you as what befell the factions; for example, the punishment which befell the people of Noah, the 'Ād, and the Thamūd, and those who came after them. And God does not seek to wrong His servants in any way – O People of My Nation! I fear for you the Day of cries and shouts; on the day you will turn and flee and there will be none to save you from God. And he whom God leads astray shall have none to guide him. And before this, Joseph came to you with clear teachings, but you only kept doubting what he bought until when he died you thought that after him God will never send another messenger." In

this manner does God lead astray those who exceed bounds and are afflicted with doubts. (30-34)

Those who dispute God's revelations without any argument that has reached them are deeply hated by God and by the believers. In this manner does God seal the heart of every arrogant tyrant. (35)

Pharaoh said: "O Hāmān! Build me a tower that I may reach the borders – the borders of the heavens that I may peep upon the Lord of Moses; I regard him to be a complete liar." And in this manner, the misdeeds of the Pharaoh were endeared to him and he was stopped from the straight path. And the ploy of Pharaoh ended up in failure. (36-37)

And he who had embraced faith said: "My people! Follow me; I am guiding you to the right path. My people! The life of this world is but a fleeting pleasure; the real abode is the life to come. He who commits an evil shall be receive in exchange what is similar to it and he who does a good deed, whether man or woman, and is also a true believer, then it is such people who will enter Paradise where they receive innumerable blessings. And my people! What is the matter; I call you towards salvation and you call me to the Fire? You bid me reject God and associate partners with Him of which I know nothing. And I call you to the Almighty, the Forgiving One. Indeed, the ones to whom you call me to neither have a say in this world nor in the next. And all of us have to return to God. And those who transgress bounds are the ones who shall be inmates of Hell. So soon you will recall the things I am telling you, and I consign my matter to God. Indeed, He is watching over His servants. (38-44)

Thus God delivered him from the evil consequences of their ploys and My punishment surrounded the Pharaoh's people. Before the Fire they are brought morning and evening, and on the day the Hereafter arrives, it will ordered: "Admit Pharaoh's people into a horrific torment!" (45-46)

And when they will argue with one another in Hell, those who remained subservient to those who posed themselves as mighty will say: "We remained your followers: can you share some part of this torment of the Fire with us?" Those who posed themselves mighty will reply: "Now all of us are in it. God has delivered a verdict between His servants." And the dwellers of Hell will say to the keepers of Hell: "Request your Lord to relieve our torment for a single day!" They will reply: "Did not messengers come to you with clear signs?" They will reply: "Yes they definitely did come." Their keepers will say: "Make this request yourselves." But the call of the disbelievers will end up in vain. (47-50)

And indeed We help Our messengers and the true believers in the life of this world and will also help them on the day when the witnesses rise

to testify; the day no excuse will avail those who wronged their souls and a curse shall be on them and for them will be an evil abode. (51-52)

And We showed Moses the way and entrusted the Israelites with the Book: as a guide and reminder for men of understanding. So remain steadfast. Indeed, God's promise is bound to be fulfilled and keep seeking forgiveness for your sins and exalt your Lord while celebrating His praises evening and morning . (55)

Explanation

وَلَقَدْ أَرْسَلْنَا مُوسَى بِآيَاتِنَا وَسُلْطَانٍ مُّبِينٍ (٢٣)[20]

The word آيَاتِ (signs) refers to the directives which Moses (sws) brought over to the Pharaoh and his courtiers and the expression سُلْطَانٍ مُّبِينٍ refers to the miraculous staff of Moses (sws) which by its nature was a divine proof given to Moses (sws) so that Pharaoh and his courtiers do not remain in any doubt that he is an envoy of God. The word سُلْطَان is used in the Qur'ān at many places to connote "proof", "permission", "authority". Its explanation has been presented at an appropriate place in this *tafsīr*. More explanation shall be found in Sūrah Raḥmān under the verse: لَا تَنفُذُونَ إِلَّا بِسُلْطَانٍ (٥٥: ٣٣).

إِلَى فِرْعَوْنَ وَهَامَانَ وَقَارُونَ فَقَالُوا سَاحِرٌ كَذَّابٌ (٢٤)[21]

Here, besides the Pharaoh two of his other prominent leaders are mentioned who were very active adversaries of Moses (sws). Both of them have been mentioned in detail in previous *sūrahs*. Of the two, Qārūn was an Israelite; however, with the help of the Pharaoh's government had gathered a lot of wealth, and it was this wealth which became the greatest reason for his animosity for Moses (sws). This has been alluded to in Sūrah Qaṣaṣ. I have referred to there that there exists great similarity between his circumstances and those of Abū Lahab. Here the leaders of the Pharaoh are mentioned to assure the Prophet (sws): just as the leaders of the Quraysh are vehemently opposing him, in a similar manner, Moses (sws) was opposed by the Pharaoh and his chiefs; however, the Almighty routed and humiliated them; the leaders of the Quraysh too will meet a similar fate if they do not desist from their ways.

The words فَقَالُوا سَاحِرٌ كَذَّابٌ refer to the fact that these people regarded the miracle worked by Moses (sws) to be an act of sorcery and regarded his claim of being sent forth by God as His Messenger to be absolutely

20. And We sent forth Moses with Our signs and with a clear proof.

21. To Pharaoh, Hāmān, and Qarūn. But they said: "A sorcerer, a liar."

false.

فَلَمَّا جَاءهُم بِالْحَقِّ مِنْ عِندِنَا قَالُوا اقْتُلُوا أَبْنَاء الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا مَعَهُ وَاسْتَحْيُوا نِسَاءهُمْ وَمَا كَيْدُ الْكَافِرِينَ إِلَّا فِي ضَلَالٍ (٢٥)[22]

The implication of this verse is that the obligation Pharaoh and his leaders owed to the true message brought to them by Moses (sws) was to accept it and mend their ways; however, they ended up doing the totally opposite. Thinking that Moses (sws) wants to make the Israelites an organized and powerful nation, they gave orders to ruthlessly stick to the policy of killing their men and letting their women live in captivity. This policy had been initiated long before the birth of Moses (rta).

وَمَا كَيْدُ الْكَافِرِينَ إِلَّا فِي ضَلَالٍ: This policy of killing the males, as alluded to at an appropriate place, was meant to keep in control the quantity of the Israelites so that their vast number is not able to become a danger for the Copts. However, all measures adopted to implement this policy ended up in vain. The Israelites continued to increase, as is indicated by references cited at an appropriate place of this *tafsīr*. The stage reached when Moses (sws) came into the fore with his open challenge, and what the Pharaoh and his leaders feared became a reality.

وَقَالَ فِرْعَوْنُ ذَرُونِي أَقْتُلْ مُوسَى وَلْيَدْعُ رَبَّهُ إِنِّي أَخَافُ أَن يُبَدِّلَ دِينَكُمْ أَوْ أَن يُظْهِرَ فِي الْأَرْضِ الْفَسَادَ (٢٦)[23]

The failure of the scheme and the demand of Moses (sws) made the Pharaoh and his leaders loose their senses. In this disturbed state of mind, the Pharaoh sought permission from his courtiers to slay Moses (sws) and if he has a Lord who has sent him forth as His messenger, then he should call Him for help. To support this suggestion of his, the Pharaoh argued that he feared that either Moses (sws) would change their religion or initiate rebellion in the land. It may be kept in mind that the Pharaoh was regarded by his people to be the manifestation of the sun God and his state was that of an incarnate king. For this reason, the call of Moses (sws) towards monotheism directly affected his divinity. If

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22. And when he brought them the truth from Ourself, they said: "Slay the sons of those who share his faith, and spare only their women." And the ploy of these disbelievers ended up in futility.

23. And the Pharaoh said: "Let me slay Moses, and then let him invoke his God! I fear that he might change your religion and spread rebellion in the land."

the Copts accepted this call, their religion would change and if they did not accept it and the Israelites became organized under the leadership of Moses (sws), the necessary consequence of this would have been rebellion in the country. Sensing these dangers, the Pharaoh sought permission from the leaders of his nation to slay Moses (sws). It is clearly evident from the word ذَرُونِي (let me) that Moses (sws) and his call had acquired such might that it was not possible for even a tyrant and dictator like Pharaoh to seize him without the help of his chiefs.

وَقَالَ مُوسَى إِنِّي عُذْتُ بِرَبِّي وَرَبِّكُم مِّن كُلِّ مُتَكَبِّرٍ لَّا يُؤْمِنُ بِيَوْمِ الْحِسَابِ (٢٧)[24]

When Moses (rta) was informed of this intention of the Pharaoh, he consigned his matter to God by saying that he seeks refuge of his own Lord and that of Pharaoh from the evil of every arrogant person who does not have faith in the Hereafter. The words "your Lord" are meant to remind and admonish the Pharaoh. He should remember that God is his Lord and no one else is the Lord that a person may rely on.

Arrogance is actually the name of showing indifference to the truth which is the result of egotism and self-centeredness and these in turn are the result of a lack of faith in the Hereafter. He who does not believe in the Hereafter is a tyrant. He can do anything in crossing the limits.

وَقَالَ رَجُلٌ مُّؤْمِنٌ مِّنْ آلِ فِرْعَوْنَ يَكْتُمُ إِيمَانَهُ أَتَقْتُلُونَ رَجُلًا أَن يَقُولَ رَبِّيَ اللهُ وَقَدْ جَاءكُم بِالْبَيِّنَاتِ مِن رَّبِّكُمْ وَإِن يَكُ كَاذِبًا فَعَلَيْهِ كَذِبُهُ وَإِن يَكُ صَادِقًا يُصِبْكُم بَعْضُ الَّذِي يَعِدُكُمْ إِنَّ اللهَ لَا يَهْدِي مَنْ هُوَ مُسْرِفٌ كَذَّابٌ (٢٨)[25]

From here begins the anecdote of a true believer. Though he belonged to the royal family of the Pharaoh yet he was a true lover of the truth and a God-fearing individual. For this reason, all his sympathies were with Moses (sws) ever since the beginning. He has already been mentioned in Sūrah Qaṣaṣ. When Moses (sws) accidentally killed a Copt and the leaders of the land started to consult one another to kill Moses (sws), it

24. Moses said: "I take refuge with my Lord and your Lord from the evil of every arrogant person who does not believe in the Day of Reckoning."

25. But a believer from the Pharaoh's kinsmen, who had hidden his faith, said: "Would you slay a man merely because he says: 'my Lord is God?' even though he has also brought to you very clear signs from your Lord. And if he is lying, then its evil consequences will afflict none but him. And if he is speaking the truth, a part at least of what he is threatening you with will smite you. God will not let him succeed who is a blatant liar and a transgressor.

was he who informed Moses (sws) about this intention and suggested to him to leave Egypt. After this Moses (sws) left for Madyan. It is evident from this incident that even before Moses (sws) was assigned prophethood, this true believer had great sympathies for the reformatory undertakings of Moses (sws).

When after returning from Madyan, Moses (sws) announced his prophethood, this true believer embraced faith; however, for a considerable period of time, he hid his faith. He perhaps felt that at that time the service he could do to Moses (sws) and his call while hiding his faith could not have been done had he declared it. He was a member of the royal family and had all the rights and privileges which such people have. It will become evident from the succeeding verses that he was a member of the Pharaoh's "House of Lords". If he had declared his faith at that time, the Pharaoh would have immediately made him a disgraced person before the whole nation by declaring him to be a national rebel.

However, in matters of religion and faith giving due consideration to some expediency is acceptable when this can be expected to be of some benefit to religion. If the matter crosses this limit and religion is faced with some decisive danger, then hiding faith at that time amounts to hypocrisy. Consequently, this true believer hid his faith as long as he thought there was some benefit for religion in it. However, when he saw that Moses' (sws) life was facing danger, he gave up this cautious behaviour and vehemently supported Moses (sws) before the Pharaoh and his courtiers and also openly declared his faith.

As referred to earlier, this incident has been narrated by the Qur'ān in this precarious phase of the prophet Muḥammad's preaching mission so that those who were hiding their faith because of some expediency or fear clearly come to know that now when their enemies are conniving with one another to kill Muḥammad (sws) it is not permissible for anyone to hide his faith; this is the time when like this true believer every person should come into the open and be prepared to endanger his own life for this.

It may be kept in mind that the words أَتَقْتُلُونَ رَجُلًا أَن يَقُولَ رَبِّيَ اللهُ وَقَدْ جَاءكُم بِالْبَيِّنَاتِ مِن رَّبِّكُمْ ("Would you slay a man merely because he says: 'my Lord is God?' even though he has also brought to you very clear signs from your Lord.") were uttered by this true believer while addressing the Pharaoh and his courtiers.

In this one sentence, he put forth many facts before the Pharaoh and his chiefs.

Firstly, to regard God as one's Lord is an indisputable fact; if someone says so then he is expressing the radiant truth on which he deserves to be

congratulated and supported and not killed.

Secondly, the signs brought by Moses (sws) are a very clear proof of him being an envoy of God; only the blind can refuse to accept that he is God-sent.

Thirdly, the Lord whose messenger he is declaring himself to be is also their messenger; it is their ignorance that they are regarding others besides Him to be their Lord as well.

Through the words وَإِن يَكُ كَاذِبًا فَعَلَيْهِ كَذِبُهُ وَإِن يَكُ صَادِقًا يُصِبْكُم بَعْضُ الَّذِي يَعِدُكُمْ the true believer has expressed the consequences of killing Moses (sws): if he was lying in his claim to prophethood, then he will face its evil results and if he was true in this claim (as was the actual case), then they should remember that a part of the punishment he is threatening them with is bound to visit them. This is a reference to the established practice of God regarding the rejecters of the messengers of God or those who plan to kill them. What the true believer meant to convey was that these people should not be blinded by their emotions so much that they are only able to see one aspect of the whole issue; they must also consider the other aspect which is very serious; since they regard him to be a liar, hence they think that killing him is very easy a task; how do they know that he is a liar; if he turns out to be a true person then this step will prove very dangerous for them; hence for their own peace and well-being they should leave him alone; they should not lead themselves to destruction by taking this step.

The words وَإِن يَكُ كَاذِبًا uttered by him are with respect to the opinion of his addressees. It is evident from this usage that a doubt expressed in a conditional sentence is not always explicit in connoting doubt; it only gives the impression of doubt. The real meaning is ascertained through context and occasion. It is essential to give due regard to this linguistic style; it will help in understanding some other verses.

Consider next the words: إِنَّ اللهَ لَا يَهْدِي مَنْ هُوَ مُسْرِفٌ كَذَّابٌ. I have already discussed the various meanings of يَهْدِي at an appropriate place of this *tafsīr*. Here it is used to connote making a person succeed in his efforts. This is a very subtle sentence. Apparently, it expresses a principle imbibed with wisdom that a person who transgresses bounds and is a liar will not be allowed by the Almighty to succeed; however, deliberation will show that it contains a very subtle slant of sarcasm for the Pharaoh which the true believer uttered right in his face before all his courtiers.

يَا قَوْمِ لَكُمُ الْمُلْكُ الْيَوْمَ ظَاهِرِينَ فِي الْأَرْضِ فَمَن يَنصُرُنَا مِن بَأْسِ اللهِ إِنْ جَاءنَا قَالَ

فِرْعَوْنُ مَا أُرِيكُمْ إِلَّا مَا أَرَى وَمَا أَهْدِيكُمْ إِلَّا سَبِيلَ الرَّشَادِ (٢٩)[26]

The speech of the true believer is gradually becomes evident. While addressing the chiefs of his nation he says: Today you are politically sovereign in the land; you can do whatever you want to; no one can stop you; however, you should seriously contemplate the question that if as a result of this God's punishment waylays us, then who will save us from His grasp.

This speech of the true believer was being delivered in the packed court of the Pharaoh before him; for this reason, the Pharaoh interrupted it at this point: قَالَ فِرْعَوْنُ مَا أُرِيكُمْ إِلَّا مَا أَرَى وَمَا أَهْدِيكُمْ إِلَّا سَبِيلَ الرَّشَادِ. He said that his suggestion of killing Moses (sws) was his considered opinion and that he was guiding them to the right policy in this regard. What he meant was that no one should think that he had given this suggestion in haste while being overcome with emotions; he had done so after fully contemplating the consequences and that this was the right course of action in this regard; if this course is not adopted immediately, then it could prove disastrous for the country.

The word ظَاهِرِينَ is an accusative of state from the genitive pronoun in لَكُمُ. Many examples of such accusatives of state from genitive pronouns can be seen in the previous *sūrahs*.

It is evident from this intervention of the Pharaoh that he had assessed that if the speech of the true believer continues uninterrupted many courtiers would be influenced by it. So like a clever political leader he tried to over-awe the audience by his sincere intentions, acumen and far-sightedness.

وَقَالَ الَّذِي آمَنَ يَا قَوْمِ إِنِّي أَخَافُ عَلَيْكُم مِّثْلَ يَوْمِ الْأَحْزَابِ (٣٠) مِثْلَ دَأْبِ قَوْمِ نُوحٍ وَعَادٍ وَثَمُودَ وَالَّذِينَ مِن بَعْدِهِمْ وَمَا اللهُ يُرِيدُ ظُلْمًا لِّلْعِبَادِ (٣١)[27]

The true believer continued with his speech without giving any

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26. O People of My Nation! Today sovereignty is with you and you are dominant in the land; but who will save us from the torment of God if it visits us?" The Pharaoh said: "I am informing you of my calculated opinion and am guiding you towards exactly the straight path."

27. And he who had embraced faith said: "O People of My Nation! I fear the same punishment will befall you as what befell the factions; for example, the punishment which befell the people of Noah, the 'Ād, and the Thamūd, and those who came after them. And God does not seek to wrong His servants in any way.

importance to the Pharaoh's intervention. He said: O People of My Nation! I want to inform you that if any harm comes to Moses (sws) then the same punishment will come upon you as came to the nations of Noah (sws), 'Ād, Thamūd and other nations after them. These nations tried to harm their respective messengers; as a result they were destroyed. You will also be destroyed if you follow in their footsteps.

The words وَمَا اللَّهُ يُرِيدُ ظُلْمًا لِّلْعِبَادِ uttered by him imply: It should remain in mind that God is very merciful to His servants; so before sending any punishment to you He has sent a messenger to inform them so that those who want to repent and mend their ways can do so. If instead of giving due value to this favour of God any attempt is made to kill His messenger, then this would mean that God has conclusively communicated the truth to them and they alone have taken yourselves to destruction.

It is evident that the Pharaoh existed after the 'Ād and the Thamūd, and these nations thrived nearby. Their details were so well-known that they could be presented before people of the Pharaoh's time to remind and admonish them.

وَيَا قَوْمِ إِنِّي أَخَافُ عَلَيْكُمْ يَوْمَ التَّنَادِ (٣٢) يَوْمَ تُوَلُّونَ مُدْبِرِينَ مَا لَكُم مِّنَ اللَّهِ مِنْ عَاصِمٍ وَمَن يُضْلِلِ اللَّهُ فَمَا لَهُ مِنْ هَادٍ (٣٣)[28]

The word يَوْمَ التَّنَادِ means "a day of shouts and cries". It is used to delineate the punishment of the Day of Judgement with which people are being warned of. When a great calamity takes place, cries of "Run", "Flee" and "Get hold of this" etc are heard here and there; thus this word is very apt to connote the punishment of that day. It is also meant to remind people that today since they are given respite by the Almighty, they are making plans to attack God and His messenger; however, when God will attack them, they will turn and run away but this running away will be of no use because no one will be able to save them from God's grasp. The words يَوْمَ تُوَلُّونَ مُدْبِرِينَ مَا لَكُم مِّنَ اللَّهِ مِنْ عَاصِمٍ point to this aspect.

The words وَمَن يُضْلِلِ اللَّهُ فَمَا لَهُ مِنْ هَادٍ of the true believer's speech are meant to convey to his addressees that his task is to only inform them of the good and evil; accepting this advice is up to them; if they continue with what they have planned, then in his opinion those whom the Almighty leads astray cannot be guided by anyone. These words allude

28. – O People of My Nation! I fear for you the Day of cries and shouts; on the day you will turn and flee and there will be none to save you from God. And he whom God leads astray shall have none to guide him.

to the established practice of the Almighty regarding providing people with guidance or leading them astray. It has been discussed in this *tafsīr* at various places.

وَلَقَدْ جَاءكُمْ يُوسُفُ مِن قَبْلُ بِالْبَيِّنَاتِ فَمَا زِلْتُمْ فِي شَكٍّ مِّمَّا جَاءكُم بِهِ حَتَّى إِذَا هَلَكَ قُلْتُمْ لَن يَبْعَثَ اللَّهُ مِن بَعْدِهِ رَسُولًا كَذَلِكَ يُضِلُّ اللَّهُ مَنْ هُوَ مُسْرِفٌ مُّرْتَابٌ (٣٤)[29]

In this verse, the true believer has referred to the history of his nation's deviation from the right path: earlier Joseph (sws) too had come to them with very clear arguments but they continuously remained in doubt regarding his teachings. What is implied is that because of the deep reverence which the king of those times had for Joseph (sws), they did not adopt a hostile attitude towards him; however, they did not value much the teachings and guidance they had been given; in fact, since they found these teachings to be against their desires they showed indifference to them and also remained deep in doubts about them.

The words حَتَّى إِذَا هَلَكَ قُلْتُمْ لَن يَبْعَثَ اللَّهُ مِن بَعْدِهِ رَسُولًا depict the fact that instead of regarding Joseph (sws) to be a manifestation of God's mercy they regarded him to be a burden. So much so, when he died they breathed a sigh of relief and became contented that God will not send any more messenger who will like Joseph (sws) will try to check their desires.

The words كَذَلِكَ يُضِلُّ اللَّهُ مَنْ هُوَ مُسْرِفٌ مُّرْتَابٌ are meant to convey the fact that the current state of deviation from the truth of the Pharaoh and his people are the result of this previous state of deviation from the truth. Those who break the limits of God and in their frenzy to follow their base desires instead of adopting the path of knowledge and conviction tread the path riddled with doubts are pushed by God to wander on this path; they never receive guidance after that.

At many places in this *tafsīr*, I have referred to the principle according to which the Almighty deals with His servants: He wants people to duly value the cognizance of good and evil and the blessing of intellect and understanding He has bestowed on them. Those who value these favours are further guided and led by the Almighty. Those who do not value it and while being overwhelmed with their base desires try to cast doubts

29. And before this, Joseph came to you with clear teachings, but you only kept doubting what he bought until when he died you thought that after him God will never send another messenger." In this manner does God lead astray those who exceed bounds and are afflicted with doubts.

on the most evident of truths and spend all their intelligence for this purpose, their innate guidance which is found in the nature of every human being is confiscated by the Almighty in retribution of this attitude. They are never guided by Him. By these words, the true believer has actually pointed to this reality, and this fact should be of special attention in these times who are trying to blur and obscure very evident facts.

الَّذِينَ يُجَادِلُونَ فِي آيَاتِ اللهِ بِغَيْرِ سُلْطَانٍ أَتَاهُمْ كَبُرَ مَقْتًا عِندَ اللهِ وَعِندَ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا كَذَلِكَ يَطْبَعُ اللهُ عَلَى كُلِّ قَلْبِ مُتَكَبِّرٍ جَبَّارٍ (٣٥)[30]

These words imply that whatever discussion should be conducted on the signs of God and His directives should be conducted on the basis of reasoning and proof. Those who oppose them without any reasoning or proof are regarded as detestable by the Almighty and the believers.

One of the points that is evident from the words كَذَلِكَ يَطْبَعُ اللهُ عَلَى كُلِّ قَلْبِ مُتَكَبِّرٍ جَبَّارٍ is that those who indulge in needless hairsplitting do so because the Almighty has set a seal on their hearts because of which they lose direction and are not ready to accept anything which is against their desires however much evident it may be.

The second point that is evident from these words is that this seal is set on their hearts because of their arrogance and haughtiness. Because of their conceit they oppose everything which is against their desires. Even if a prophet or a messenger tries to make them understand something they are not prepared to hear him because they question his status and reckon that they were more worthy of being given propethood. In these times, many people having delusions of grandeur make fun of very clear teachings of Islam.

وَقَالَ فِرْعَوْنُ يَا هَامَانُ ابْنِ لِي صَرْحًا لَّعَلِّي أَبْلُغُ الْأَسْبَابَ (٣٦) أَسْبَابَ السَّمَاوَاتِ فَأَطَّلِعَ إِلَى إِلَهِ مُوسَى وَإِنِّي لَأَظُنُّهُ كَاذِبًا وَكَذَلِكَ زُيِّنَ لِفِرْعَوْنَ سُوءُ عَمَلِهِ وَصُدَّ عَنِ السَّبِيلِ وَمَا كَيْدُ فِرْعَوْنَ إِلَّا فِي تَبَابٍ (٣٧) وَقَالَ الَّذِي آمَنَ يَا قَوْمِ اتَّبِعُونِ أَهْدِكُمْ سَبِيلَ الرَّشَادِ (٣٨) يَا قَوْمِ إِنَّمَا هَذِهِ الْحَيَاةُ الدُّنْيَا مَتَاعٌ وَإِنَّ الْآخِرَةَ هِيَ دَارُ الْقَرَارِ (٣٩)[31]

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30. Those who dispute God's revelations without any argument that has reached them are deeply hated by God and by the believers. In this manner does God seal the heart of every arrogant tyrant.

31. Pharaoh said: "O Hāmān! Build me a tower that I may reach the borders –

The true believer did challenge the Pharaoh but like worldly leaders did not try to over-awe him with the number of his followers and associates. On the contrary, in consonance with the way of the prophets of God, he reminded him of the Hereafter by telling him that the life of this world and its pleasures are but transient. The real abode of people is the Hereafter; so they should not ruin their eternal life to benefit from these fleeting pleasures.

مَنْ عَمِلَ سَيِّئَةً فَلَا يُجْزَى إِلَّا مِثْلَهَا وَمَنْ عَمِلَ صَالِحًا مِّن ذَكَرٍ أَوْ أُنثَى وَهُوَ مُؤْمِنٌ
فَأُوْلَئِكَ يَدْخُلُونَ الْجَنَّةَ يُرْزَقُونَ فِيهَا بِغَيْرِ حِسَابٍ (٤٠)[32]

This verse portrays the principle on the basis of which reward and punishment will be take place in the Hereafter. Those who reach there with the provision of vice will be punished commensurately so that no excess is committed against them; however, those who reach there with the provision of virtue will be admitted to Paradise and there they will receive innumerable favours and provisions. Here it may be kept in mind that this address of the true believer is to the leaders of the aristocracy most of which must have wanted these transient pleasures of life and it was to gain them that they must have continued to be his yes-men. He directed their attention to not ruin their eternal life for this temporary life.

وَيَا قَوْمِ مَا لِي أَدْعُوكُمْ إِلَى النَّجَاةِ وَتَدْعُونَنِي إِلَى النَّارِ (٤١) تَدْعُونَنِي لِأَكْفُرَ بِاللَّهِ وَأُشْرِكَ
بِهِ مَا لَيْسَ لِي بِهِ عِلْمٌ وَأَنَا أَدْعُوكُمْ إِلَى الْعَزِيزِ الْغَفَّارِ (٤٢)[33]

It is evident from contextual indications that just as the Pharaoh interfered in the speech of this true believer, similarly the leaders of his nation also posed some objections on his speech. As our readers may

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the borders of the heavens that I may peep upon the Lord of Moses; I regard him to be a complete liar." And in this manner, the misdeeds of the Pharaoh were endeared to him and he was stopped from the straight path. And the ploy of Pharaoh ended up in failure. And he who had embraced faith said: "My people! Follow me; I am guiding you to the right path. My people! The life of this world is but a fleeting pleasure; the real abode is the life to come.

32. He who commits an evil shall be receive in exchange what is similar to it and he who does a good deed, whether man or woman, and is also a true believer, then it is such people who will enter Paradise where they receive innumerable blessings.

33. And my people! What is the matter; I call you towards salvation and you call me to the Fire? You bid me reject God and associate partners with Him of which I know nothing. And I call you to the Almighty, the Forgiving One.

have noticed, this true believer did not take any notice of the interventions of the Pharaoh because nothing good was expected from him. However, he did reply to the objections of these leaders and did so in a very touching and sympathetic way. Obviously, these leaders must have objected that the whole speech of this believer was against their idols which were continued to be worshipped by their forefathers and that he was creating a new religion separate from that of their forefathers. At this, the true believer very movingly answered them that it is very strange that he is calling them towards salvation while they are called him towards Hell; he is calling them towards the merciful and mighty Lord – Who can both seize them and forgive them, while they are calling him to associate with God partners about whom he has no knowledge that they are His partners. The implication is that as far as the issue of a God is concerned Who readily accepts repentance and is merciful, then this is an established fact; even the polytheists believe in Him and there is no option but to accept Him. As for the fact that He has some associates and partners, then this needs proof and that he (ie the true believer) has no proof it; if he makes someone God's partner without any proof then how will he face God.

It becomes evident from the words لِأَكْفُرَ بِاللهِ وَأُشْرِكَ بِهِ that there is no difference between polytheism (*shirk*) and disbelief (*kufr*) with regard to their reality. A person who sets up partners with God in fact disbelieves in Him. This is because in religion it is not merely enough to believe in God; it is essential to believe in Him with all His attributes and rights and the greatest of these rights is to accept His oneness.

لَا جَرَمَ أَنَّمَا تَدْعُونَنِي إِلَيْهِ لَيْسَ لَهُ دَعْوَةٌ فِي الدُّنْيَا وَلَا فِي الْآخِرَةِ وَأَنَّ مَرَدَّنَا إِلَى اللهِ وَأَنَّ الْمُسْرِفِينَ هُمْ أَصْحَابُ النَّارِ (٤٣)[34]

The expression لَا جَرَمَ means لَا بُدَّ ، لَا مُحَالَةَ (this is a fact; there can be no two opinions about it; it cannot be doubted). This expression while evolving from this meaning also at times connotes an oath.

The negation لَا is the negation of its benefit; ie calling them will be of no use neither in this world nor the next. This fact is alluded to at other places of the Qur'ān as well.

After presenting the argument depicted in the previous verse the true

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34. Indeed, the ones to whom you call me to neither have a say in this world nor in the next. And all of us have to return to God. And those who transgress bounds are the ones who shall be inmates of Hell.

believer in this verse has summed up the whole discussion before the audience. He has said that it is certain that the idols whose worship they are calling him to are the products of their fancy. Beseeching or invoking them is of no use in this world or in the next; whatever they obtain in this world is from God and in the next world too all of them shall return to God. No one from among these alleged deities will be their protector or helper.

The word مُسْرِفِينَ in the expression وَأَنَّ الْمُسْرِفِينَ هُمْ أَصْحَابُ النَّارِ refers to those who have committed polytheism and thereby wronged their souls. The implication is that this is also an indubitable fact that those would wrong their souls will have no intercessor; in fact, all such people will end up in Hell.

فَسَتَذْكُرُونَ مَا أَقُولُ لَكُمْ وَأُفَوِّضُ أَمْرِي إِلَى اللهِ إِنَّ اللهَ بَصِيرٌ بِالْعِبَادِ (٤٤)[35]

This is the last and most sympathetic and compassionate sentence of the speech of the true believer. His final words are: whether today you people accept what I say or not, you will definitely remember my advice in the coming phases, but at that time this will be of no avail. This is a reference not only to the reward and punishment of the Hereafter but also to the punishment that will visit them if they denied their messenger which he earlier on had warned them of. It is obvious that when both these types of punishments will befall them they will recall this speech of his and express regret; but this will be of no use at that time.

The words وَأُفَوِّضُ أَمْرِي إِلَى اللهِ إِنَّ اللهَ بَصِيرٌ بِالْعِبَادِ of the true believer imply that whatever he wanted to say he has said and now his addressees can do what they like. If they become his enemies because of this truth that he has spoken, then he has consigned his matter to God. He is the protector of His people and watches over them (إِنَّ اللهَ بَصِيرٌ بِالْعِبَادِ).

فَوَقَاهُ اللهُ سَيِّئَاتِ مَا مَكَرُوا وَحَاقَ بِآلِ فِرْعَوْنَ سُوءُ الْعَذَابِ (٤٥)[36]

It is evident from this verse that after this speech of the true believer, the Pharaoh and his chiefs turned into his foes and began conspiring against him in various ways in order to bring him back into their religion; however, the Almighty protected him from their conspiracies. It is evident from this beyond any shadow of doubt that the Pharaoh and

35. So soon you will recall the things I am telling you, and I consign my matter to God. Indeed, He is watching over His servants.

36. Thus God delivered him from the evil consequences of their ploys and My punishment surrounded the Pharaoh's people.

his courtiers never succeeded in conspiring against him to force him to give up the true faith. It is also similarly evident that the Almighty protects all His servants who declare the truth.

The word آل obviously refers to his family as well as followers. The verse says that the Almighty protected the true believer from the evil designs of the Pharaoh and his companions; however, the latter were surrounded by "an evil punishment." This refers to the decisive punishment which caused the Pharaoh and all his armies to drown in the sea. This punishment is called "an evil punishment" because during the time Moses (sws) preached the people of Egypt, many punishments visited them but all of them were meant to warn and remind them and both the believers and the disbelievers were tested through them. However, while the believers were protected from this final punishment, the Pharaoh and his race was totally routed. It is evident from the word حَاقَ that this punishment surrounded them in such a manner that they were not able to escape from it in any way.

النَّارُ يُعْرَضُونَ عَلَيْهَا غُدُوًّا وَعَشِيًّا وَيَوْمَ تَقُومُ السَّاعَةُ أَدْخِلُوا آلَ فِرْعَوْنَ أَشَدَّ الْعَذَابِ (٤٦)[37]

This verse furnishes details of the punishment mentioned in the previous verse: in the life of Barzakh they are made to observe Hell every now and then so that they continue to keep in mind their real abode and when the Day of Judgement comes it will directed that the Pharaoh and all his followers be cast into the grievous punishment of Hell. It is mentioned at many places in the Qur'ān that after death pious and wicked souls will find themselves in Barzakh in an atmosphere that is in accordance with their deeds. This is like a prelude to them for Paradise or Hell. When the Day of Judgement comes, reward and punishment will appear in their actual forms before people. The grave punishment which is mentioned in Ḥadīth narratives relates to this world of Barzakh.

وَإِذْ يَتَحَاجُّونَ فِي النَّارِ فَيَقُولُ الضُّعَفَاء لِلَّذِينَ اسْتَكْبَرُوا إِنَّا كُنَّا لَكُمْ تَبَعًا فَهَلْ أَنتُم مُّغْنُونَ عَنَّا نَصِيبًا مِّنَ النَّارِ (٤٧) قَالَ الَّذِينَ اسْتَكْبَرُوا إِنَّا كُلٌّ فِيهَا إِنَّ اللَّهَ قَدْ حَكَمَ بَيْنَ الْعِبَادِ (٤٨)[38]

37. Before the Fire they are brought morning and evening, and on the day the Hereafter arrives, it will ordered: "Admit Pharaoh's people into a horrific torment!"

38. And when they will argue with one another in Hell, those who remained subservient to those who posed themselves as mighty will say: "We remained

I have indicated earlier that the anecdote of this true believer has been recounted also to encourage people who were hesitant of expressing their faith because of being over-awed by their leaders. It is now depicted in these verses that in the gatherings of this world people who do not have the courage to acknowledge and proclaim the truth for fear of their leaders will one day find themselves and their leaders in Hell mutually cursing one another. The weak and the oppressed will tell their leaders that they had blindly followed them in the previous world; so will they now even partly share with them the torment of Hell. The leaders will reply that the time for expressing objections and grievances has expired; now both of them have to remain in this torment; the Almighty has decided very justly between His people. The implication is that this excuse will be of no use to a person that he was under pressure from others and hence remained a follower of evil. Each person is responsible for his own self; he cannot put this responsibility on others and absolve himself. Hence a person however much under pressure he may be should declare the truth while reposing his trust in God and should rest assured that the Almighty will protect him and even if he has to face death in His cause then this death will be considered as martyrdom.

Here it needs to be kept in mind that the Qur'ān has used the word اسْتَكْبَرُوا for these leaders who were an embodiment of disbelief and disobedience. The word means: "people who thought themselves to be of high status or who were inebriated with their high status." This word is the most appropriate term for such defiant leaders. Greatness in this world is for God alone and hence every leadership which takes people away from the path of God is arrogance personified and its ultimate fate is Hell – not only for the leaders but also for their followers.

وَقَالَ الَّذِينَ فِي النَّارِ لِخَزَنَةِ جَهَنَّمَ ادْعُوا رَبَّكُمْ يُخَفِّفْ عَنَّا يَوْمًا مِّنَ الْعَذَابِ (٤٩) قَالُوا أَوَلَمْ
تَكُ تَأْتِيكُمْ رُسُلُكُم بِالْبَيِّنَاتِ قَالُوا بَلَى قَالُوا فَادْعُوا وَمَا دُعَاءُ الْكَافِرِينَ إِلَّا فِي ضَلَالٍ (٥٠)[39]

When the companions of Hell will see that neither their deities and

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your followers: can you share some part of this torment of the Fire with us?" Those who posed themselves mighty will reply: "Now all of us are in it. God has delivered a verdict between His servants."

39. And the dwellers of Hell will say to the keepers of Hell: "Request your Lord to relieve our torment for a single day!" They will reply: "Did not messengers come to you with clear signs?" They will reply: "Yes they definitely did come." Their keepers will say: "Make this request yourselves." But the call of the disbelievers will end up in vain.

intercessors have be of any avail to them nor these leaders could help them they in this state of utter hopelessness will beseech the guards of Hell to request God to lessen the punishment just for one day so that they can have some reprieve. These guards will in return ask them whether messengers of God had not come to them with clear signs? At this, the dwellers of Hell will reply in the affirmative. Hearing this reply, the guards will tell them to make this request directly to God; they cannot make this request on behalf of such worthless people.

The words وَمَا دُعَاء الْكَافِرِينَ إِلَّا فِي ضَلَالٍ depict the fact that all the requests and cries of the disbelievers will end up in vain. Neither will their deities hear these calls nor will these leaders prove to be of any help to them nor will God listen to them. All doors of hope shall stand closed on them.

إِنَّا لَنَنصُرُ رُسُلَنَا وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا فِي الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا وَيَوْمَ يَقُومُ الْأَشْهَادُ (٥١)[40]

This verse relates to verse forty five. The in between verses digressed to describe the punishment of Hell which the Pharaoh and his associates will have to face. The Almighty says in this verse that just as He helped Moses (sws) and the true believer, in a similar manner He not only helps in this world His messengers and those who profess faith in them but also on the Day when witnesses will stand up to bear evidence.

Our exegetes were afflicted with many confusions in interpreting this verse. The reason is that in it God very explicitly promises that He will also help in this very world the messengers and those who profess faith in them. The reason for this is that they are not fully aware of the difference between a *nabī* (prophet) and a *rasūl* (messenger). I have continued to point out at various places in this *tafsīr* that it should be kept in mind. The practice of God regard the *rasūls* is that they set up a divine court of justice for people in this very world on behalf of the God. If their people deny them, these people are necessarily destroyed whether through some natural calamity or through the sword of the believers and regardless of this destruction taking place in the lifetime of a *rasūl* or after he departs from this world. The life of every *rasūl* from Noah (sws) to Jesus (sws) bears witness to this established practice of God and I have continued to explain it.

The expression وَيَوْمَ يَقُومُ الْأَشْهَادُ obviously refers to the Day of Judgement because on this day the Almighty will ask each prophet and messenger to bear witness to what they taught their people; similarly all

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40. And indeed We help Our messengers and the true believers in the life of this world and will also help them on the day when the witnesses rise to testify;

the *ummahs* will be questioned regarding the response they gave to their respective messenger. The angels of God will also appear with the record of the deeds of people. These details have already been mentioned in Sūrah Mā'idah as well as some previous *sūrahs*.

يَوْمَ لَا يَنفَعُ الظَّالِمِينَ مَعْذِرَتُهُمْ وَلَهُمُ اللَّعْنَةُ وَلَهُمْ سُوءُ الدَّارِ (٥٢)[41]

This verse explains the words وَيَوْمَ يَقُومُ الْأَشْهَادُ of the previous verse: such will be the clarity and certainty of the evidence borne by witnesses produced in the divine court on that day that no excuse of people who have wronged their souls would be of any benefit to them. So much so, the excuse of people who would regard their leaders to be responsible for leading them astray would not be accepted. Their leaders will vehemently negate them and say that their followers deserve this fate because they full well knew that their leaders had gone astray; these leaders will tell them that both of them are equal and both will have to endure a stern punishment of their deeds.

The words وَلَهُمُ اللَّعْنَةُ وَلَهُمْ سُوءُ الدَّارِ depict the fact that their excuse will be greeted with curse from God and his angels and in retribution of their deeds they will end up in an evil abode.

وَلَقَدْ آتَيْنَا مُوسَى الْهُدَى وَأَوْرَثْنَا بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ الْكِتَابَ (٥٣) هُدًى وَذِكْرَى لِأُولِي الْأَلْبَابِ (٥٤)[42]

These verses explain the help which is mentioned earlier viz. the Pharaoh and his followers and associates were afflicted with divine punishment while the Moses (sws) and the Israelites who professed belief in him were bestowed with guidance and the Book of God.

The Book of God is a compendium of laws for the promise of supremacy and sovereignty in this world found in the promise concealed in the words وَأَوْرَثْنَا بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ الْكِتَابَ. An essential requisite of this is that whichever people this Book is given, they achieve supremacy and sovereignty. Thus the Israelites were supreme as long as they adhered to this Book.

The words هُدًى وَذِكْرَى لِأُولِي الْأَلْبَابِ state the objective of the Book: it is

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41. The day no excuse will avail those who wronged their souls and a curse shall be on them and for them will be an evil abode.

42. And We showed Moses the way and entrusted the Israelites with the Book: as a guide and reminder for men of understanding.

given to people so that it guide people towards God and remind people of His directives. However, only those people will benefit from it who have vision and intellect. Nothing can be of benefit to those who are deprived of vision and intellect. These words are a sarcastic remark on those among the Israelites who because of their foolishness and inclination towards going astray from the truth deprived themselves of the light of this Book.

فَاصْبِرْ إِنَّ وَعْدَ اللهِ حَقٌّ وَاسْتَغْفِرْ لِذَنبِكَ وَسَبِّحْ بِحَمْدِ رَبِّكَ بِالْعَشِيِّ وَالْإِبْكَارِ (٥٥)[43]

This is a summary of the whole discussion and is meant to assure the Prophet Muḥammad (sws). He is asked to adhere to his preaching; God's promise is certain to materialize. The reference is to the promise mentioned in verse fifty one earlier: the Almighty will grant success to His messengers and their followers both in this world and in the Hereafter.

The words وَاسْتَغْفِرْ لِذَنبِكَ وَسَبِّحْ بِحَمْدِ رَبِّكَ بِالْعَشِيِّ وَالْإِبْكَارِ describe the methodology to acquire the patience which is an essential condition for this promise to materialize. The Prophet (sws) is asked to continuously seek forgiveness from the Almighty for any blemishes and to exalt Him and celebrate His praises. I have already explained at an appropriate place of this *tafsīr* that the way to acquire patience is to offer the prayer and to seek forgiveness. I have also pointed out that such addresses are not directed at the person of the Prophet (sws); he is addressed in the capacity of his people's representative. People who are not aware of such addresses and the subtlety found in them feel very repulsive to see the ascription of sin to the Prophet (sws) in this verse. The fact is that such address has a specific occasion as just explained.

Section III: Verses (56-85)

Coming up are the closing verses of this *sūrah*. These verses besides urging the Prophet (sws) to show patience and perseverance also give him glad tidings of help and victory in very clear words and in equally clear words sound a threat to the Quraysh of the punishment they will face in this world and in that to come. Interspersed between these glad tidings and threat are found arguments to substantiate monotheism and

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43. So remain steadfast. Indeed, God's promise is bound to be fulfilled and keep seeking forgiveness for your sins and exalt your Lord while celebrating His praises evening and morning.

the Hereafter on which these glad tidings and this threat are based. These arguments are derived from morality, from the world within man and from the one outside him.

Readers may now proceed to recite these verse.

Text and Translation

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يُجَادِلُونَ فِي آيَاتِ اللهِ بِغَيْرِ سُلْطَانٍ أَتَاهُمْ إِن فِي صُدُورِهِمْ إِلَّا كِبْرٌ مَّا هُم
بِبَالِغِيهِ فَاسْتَعِذْ بِاللهِ إِنَّهُ هُوَ السَّمِيعُ الْبَصِيرُ (٥٦) لَخَلْقُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ أَكْبَرُ مِنْ
خَلْقِ النَّاسِ وَلَكِنَّ أَكْثَرَ النَّاسِ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ (٥٧) وَمَا يَسْتَوِي الْأَعْمَى وَالْبَصِيرُ وَالَّذِينَ
آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ وَلَا الْمُسِيءُ قَلِيلًا مَّا تَتَذَكَّرُونَ (٥٨) إِنَّ السَّاعَةَ لَآتِيَةٌ لَّا رَيْبَ
فِيهَا وَلَكِنَّ أَكْثَرَ النَّاسِ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ (٥٩) وَقَالَ رَبُّكُمُ ادْعُونِي أَسْتَجِبْ لَكُمْ إِنَّ الَّذِينَ
يَسْتَكْبِرُونَ عَنْ عِبَادَتِي سَيَدْخُلُونَ جَهَنَّمَ دَاخِرِينَ (٦٠) اللهُ الَّذِي جَعَلَ لَكُمُ اللَّيْلَ
لِتَسْكُنُوا فِيهِ وَالنَّهَارَ مُبْصِرًا إِنَّ اللهَ لَذُو فَضْلٍ عَلَى النَّاسِ وَلَكِنَّ أَكْثَرَ النَّاسِ لَا
يَشْكُرُونَ (٦١) ذَلِكُمُ اللهُ رَبُّكُمْ خَالِقُ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ لَّا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ فَأَنَّى تُؤْفَكُونَ (٦٢)
كَذَلِكَ يُؤْفَكُ الَّذِينَ كَانُوا بِآيَاتِ اللهِ يَجْحَدُونَ (٦٣) اللهُ الَّذِي جَعَلَ لَكُمُ الْأَرْضَ قَرَارًا
وَالسَّمَاء بِنَاء وَصَوَّرَكُمْ فَأَحْسَنَ صُوَرَكُمْ وَرَزَقَكُم مِّنَ الطَّيِّبَاتِ ذَلِكُمُ اللهُ رَبُّكُمْ
فَتَبَارَكَ اللهُ رَبُّ الْعَالَمِينَ (٦٤) هُوَ الْحَيُّ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ فَادْعُوهُ مُخْلِصِينَ لَهُ الدِّينَ الْحَمْدُ
لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ (٦٥) قُلْ إِنِّي نُهِيتُ أَنْ أَعْبُدَ الَّذِينَ تَدْعُونَ مِن دُونِ اللهِ لَمَّا جَاءنِيَ
الْبَيِّنَاتُ مِن رَّبِّي وَأُمِرْتُ أَنْ أُسْلِمَ لِرَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ (٦٦) هُوَ الَّذِي خَلَقَكُم مِّن تُرَابٍ ثُمَّ
مِن نُّطْفَةٍ ثُمَّ مِنْ عَلَقَةٍ ثُمَّ يُخْرِجُكُمْ طِفْلًا ثُمَّ لِتَبْلُغُوا أَشُدَّكُمْ ثُمَّ لِتَكُونُوا شُيُوخًا
وَمِنكُم مَّن يُتَوَفَّى مِن قَبْلُ وَلِتَبْلُغُوا أَجَلًا مُّسَمًّى وَلَعَلَّكُمْ تَعْقِلُونَ (٦٧) هُوَ الَّذِي
يُحْيِي وَيُمِيتُ فَإِذَا قَضَى أَمْرًا فَإِنَّمَا يَقُولُ لَهُ كُن فَيَكُونُ (٦٨) أَلَمْ تَرَ إِلَى الَّذِينَ يُجَادِلُونَ
فِي آيَاتِ اللهِ أَنَّى يُصْرَفُونَ (٦٩) الَّذِينَ كَذَّبُوا بِالْكِتَابِ وَبِمَا أَرْسَلْنَا بِهِ رُسُلَنَا فَسَوْفَ
يَعْلَمُونَ (٧٠) إِذِ الْأَغْلَالُ فِي أَعْنَاقِهِمْ وَالسَّلَاسِلُ يُسْحَبُونَ (٧١) فِي الْحَمِيمِ ثُمَّ فِي النَّارِ
يُسْجَرُونَ (٧٢) ثُمَّ قِيلَ لَهُمْ أَيْنَ مَا كُنتُمْ تُشْرِكُونَ (٧٣) مِن دُونِ اللهِ قَالُوا ضَلُّوا عَنَّا بَل
لَّمْ نَكُن نَّدْعُو مِن قَبْلُ شَيْئًا كَذَلِكَ يُضِلُّ اللهُ الْكَافِرِينَ (٧٤) ذَلِكُم بِمَا كُنتُمْ

تَفْرَحُونَ فِي الْأَرْضِ بِغَيْرِ الْحَقِّ وَبِمَا كُنتُمْ تَمْرَحُونَ (٧٥) ادْخُلُوا أَبْوَابَ جَهَنَّمَ خَالِدِينَ
فِيهَا فَبِئْسَ مَثْوَى الْمُتَكَبِّرِينَ (٧٦) فَاصْبِرْ إِنَّ وَعْدَ اللهِ حَقٌّ فَإِمَّا نُرِيَنَّكَ بَعْضَ الَّذِي
نَعِدُهُمْ أَوْ نَتَوَفَّيَنَّكَ فَإِلَيْنَا يُرْجَعُونَ (٧٧) وَلَقَدْ أَرْسَلْنَا رُسُلًا مِّن قَبْلِكَ مِنْهُم مَّن
قَصَصْنَا عَلَيْكَ وَمِنْهُم مَّن لَّمْ نَقْصُصْ عَلَيْكَ وَمَا كَانَ لِرَسُولٍ أَنْ يَأْتِيَ بِآيَةٍ إِلَّا بِإِذْنِ اللهِ
فَإِذَا جَاء أَمْرُ اللهِ قُضِيَ بِالْحَقِّ وَخَسِرَ هُنَالِكَ الْمُبْطِلُونَ (٧٨) اللهُ الَّذِي جَعَلَ لَكُمُ
الْأَنْعَامَ لِتَرْكَبُوا مِنْهَا وَمِنْهَا تَأْكُلُونَ (٧٩) وَلَكُمْ فِيهَا مَنَافِعُ وَلِتَبْلُغُوا عَلَيْهَا حَاجَةً فِي
صُدُورِكُمْ وَعَلَيْهَا وَعَلَى الْفُلْكِ تُحْمَلُونَ (٨٠) وَيُرِيكُمْ آيَاتِهِ فَأَيَّ آيَاتِ اللهِ تُنكِرُونَ
(٨١) أَفَلَمْ يَسِيرُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ فَيَنظُرُوا كَيْفَ كَانَ عَاقِبَةُ الَّذِينَ مِن قَبْلِهِمْ كَانُوا أَكْثَرَ مِنْهُمْ
وَأَشَدَّ قُوَّةً وَآثَارًا فِي الْأَرْضِ فَمَا أَغْنَى عَنْهُم مَّا كَانُوا يَكْسِبُونَ (٨٢) فَلَمَّا جَاءتْهُمْ
رُسُلُهُم بِالْبَيِّنَاتِ فَرِحُوا بِمَا عِندَهُم مِّنَ الْعِلْمِ وَحَاقَ بِهِم مَّا كَانُوا بِهِ يَسْتَهْزِؤُون (٨٣)
فَلَمَّا رَأَوْا بَأْسَنَا قَالُوا آمَنَّا بِاللهِ وَحْدَهُ وَكَفَرْنَا بِمَا كُنَّا بِهِ مُشْرِكِينَ (٨٤) فَلَمْ يَكُ يَنفَعُهُمْ
إِيمَانُهُمْ لَمَّا رَأَوْا بَأْسَنَا سُنَّتَ اللهِ الَّتِي قَدْ خَلَتْ فِي عِبَادِهِ وَخَسِرَ هُنَالِكَ الْكَافِرُونَ (٨٥)

As for those who indulge in baseless arguments about the signs of God without any reasoning that has come to them, arrogance is entrenched in their hearts in which they will never succeed. So seek refuge with God; it is He Who really sees and hears. (56)

Creating the heavens and the earth is more difficult than creating people; yet most people know not. The blind and those who can see are not equal, nor are the evil-doers the equals of those who have professed faith and did righteous deeds. Seldom do you people take thought. Indeed, the Hour is sure to come; in this, there is no doubt; yet most are not embracing faith. And your Lord has said: "Call on me and I will accept your request. Those Who arrogantly evade worshipping Me shall enter Hell with all humiliation." (57-60)

It was God who made the night dark for you so that you make rest in and lit up the day that you may work in it. God is bountiful to men, yet most people are not grateful. Indeed Allah alone is your Lord, the Creator of all things. There is no god but Him. So how do you show foolishness? Similar foolishness was shown by those have been denying God's revelations. (61-63)

It is God who has made the earth a dwelling-place for you, and the sky a roof and moulded your bodies and did so in a befitting manner and

provided you with wholesome things. Such is God, your Lord. Thus very blessed is God, Lord of the Universe. He is the Living One; there is no god but Him so invoke Him only with His pure obedience. Gratitude is for Him, Lord of the Universe! (64-65)

Say: "I have been forbidden to worship which you invoke besides God now that clear signs have come to me from my Lord. And I have been asked to submit myself. It is He Who created you from clay, then from a little germ, then from a clot of blood. He then brings you into this world as infants; He then nourishes you so that you may reach your adolescence. Then He gives you time to reach old age. And some of you die before this and to some He gives times to complete an appointed term. And this is because you may understand. It is He Who gives life and Who gives death. So when He decrees a thing, He need only say: "Be," and it is. (66-68)

Do you not see those who indulge in baseless arguments about the revelations of God? Where are they turned away. Those who have denied the Book of God and those things as well which We sent with Our Messengers. They shall soon know when there will be yolks round their necks and shackles [around their feet]; they shall be dragged through boiling water; then cast into the fire of Hell. Then they will be asked: "Where are those whom you associated with God?" They will reply: "They have forsaken us; in fact, we have never been worshipping anything." In this way, God will make the disbelievers lose their senses. This is because without any basis you showed pride and conceit in the land. Enter the gates of Hell to stay therein forever. What an evil abode it is for the arrogant. (69-76)

Therefore, show perseverance. Indeed, the promise of God is bound to come true. Either We will show you a glimpse of the punishment We are threatening them with or give death to you. Thus to Us shall they return. (77)

And We sent forth other messengers before you; We have already recounted the accounts of some before you and there are some others whose account We have not recounted before you. And none of these messengers had the power to show a sign except by God's permission. Thus when God's decree arrives, justice shall prevail and at that time the evil-doers will be among the losers. (78)

It is God who has created beasts for you so that you can use some to ride on and some others are used as food for you and they have other benefits for you as well and has also created them so that may fulfill some of your heart's desires; and on them and on ships you are boarded. (79-80)

And He shows you other innumerable signs; so which of God's signs will you deny? Have they not journeyed through the land to see the fate of those before them. They were more numerous than them in the land with regard to their splendour more powerful than them; yet all their feats were of no use to them. (81-82)

So when their messengers came to them with very clear signs, they proudly boasted of their own knowledge. And the punishment which they made fun of surrounded them. So when they beheld Our punishment, they said: "We now believe in the one God and those which We served besides Him." But their faith was of no avail to them when they saw Our punishment. Such is the established practice of God which manifested itself among His servants earlier on as well and at that time the disbelievers end up as losers. (83-85)

Explanation

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يُجَادِلُونَ فِي آيَاتِ اللهِ بِغَيْرِ سُلْطَانٍ أَتَاهُمْ إِن فِي صُدُورِهِمْ إِلَّا كِبْرٌ مَّا هُم بِبَالِغِيهِ فَاسْتَعِذْ بِاللهِ إِنَّهُ هُوَ السَّمِيعُ الْبَصِيرُ (٥٦)[44]

This verse sound an assurance to the Prophet (sws) that he should not worry about those who are baselessly arguing with him about the signs of God. The word "signs" refer to the arguments mentioned earlier which substantiate monotheism and the Hereafter in various styles. The verse cautions him that the reason for their opposition is not that the truth is not evident to them or that they have some reasoning against it; the fact is that they are opposing him because if they accept what he says then this would be acknowledging his superiority over them. This of course would severely dent the conceit and vanity they have for their leadership.

The words مَّا هُم بِبَالِغِيهِ refer to the fact that this arrogance will not lead them to success. It is now the verdict of God that He will make the truth dominant through the Prophet (sws) and these opponents of his will be humiliated both in this world and in that to come.

The words فَاسْتَعِذْ بِاللهِ إِنَّهُ هُوَ السَّمِيعُ الْبَصِيرُ point to the fact that because of their arrogance, these people will try to harm him; but he should not worry and seek refuge with his God; he should rest assured that it is God who really watches and hears and He will protect him from the evil of these arrogance people.

44. As for those who indulge in baseless arguments about the signs of God without any reasoning that has come to them, arrogance is entrenched in their hearts in which they will never succeed. So seek refuge with God; it is He Who really sees and hears.

لَخَلْقُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ أَكْبَرُ مِنْ خَلْقِ النَّاسِ وَلَكِنَّ أَكْثَرَ النَّاسِ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ (٥٧)[45]

The verse says that if these people are led away by the misconception that after people die and become dust it is impossible to be created again, then this is their ignorance. How can it be difficult for the God Who can bring the heavens and the earth into existence to create mankind again. Was creating the first of these more difficult or the second? If God can create such huge structures how can it be difficult for Him to accomplish this task which is much lesser in extent. This is an obvious fact that everyone must understand yet as the verse says: وَلَكِنَّ أَكْثَرَ النَّاسِ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ ie. most people do not understand even such an obvious reality.

وَمَا يَسْتَوِي الْأَعْمَى وَالْبَصِيرُ وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ وَلَا الْمُسِيءُ قَلِيلًا مَّا تَتَذَكَّرُونَ (٥٨) إِنَّ السَّاعَةَ لَآتِيَةٌ لَّا رَيْبَ فِيهَا وَلَكِنَّ أَكْثَرَ النَّاسِ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ (٥٩)[46]

These verses explain the ethical requirement for the Hereafter to take place. It is said that if there is no Hereafter as these people have assumed, then this would mean that this world is place that will be left unaccountable: those who are devoid of vision and intellect and those have it are equal and that there is no difference between the pious and the wicked. This obviously is not true. It negates the attributes of justice, wisdom, mercy and power of the Almighty which in other words negates the Almighty Himself. For this reason, it is certain for the Hereafter to come; there is no doubt in this; however, it is strange that most people are not professing faith in this obvious reality.

The word أَعْمَى here refers to blind in intellect and the word بَصِيرٌ refers to people who not only can see but also have visionary insight and are ones who reflect on the signs of God.

It is evident from the words قَلِيلًا مَّا تَتَذَكَّرُونَ that these facts are not so concealed that no one is able to understand them. On the other hand, what is the remedy for people who are not ready to use their ears and eyes.

45. Creating the heavens and the earth is more difficult than creating people; yet most people know not.

46. The blind and those who can see are not equal, nor are the evil-doers the equals of those who have professed faith and did righteous deeds. Seldom do you people take thought. Indeed, the Hour is sure to come; in this, there is no doubt; yet most are not embracing faith.

وَقَالَ رَبُّكُمُ ادْعُونِي أَسْتَجِبْ لَكُمْ إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يَسْتَكْبِرُونَ عَنْ عِبَادَتِي سَيَدْخُلُونَ جَهَنَّمَ دَاخِرِينَ (٦٠)[47]

The word اِسْتِكْبارٌ (arrogance) here encompasses the meaning of evasion.

After reminding people of the Hereafter, a reminder is now sounded about monotheism: The Prophet's Lord has declared that no means or intermediary is required to ask from Him. Whoever wants to ask should ask from Him; He accepts the petitions of people. The implication is that when the Almighty is not appointing any means or intermediary then what is the need of making others as intercessors and then cajoling flattering them. This verse negates the notion of the Idolaters that it is through their deities only that people can access God. It states that the Almighty has not deputed intermediaries between Himself and His servants; on the contrary, every person can directly access Him and implore and beseech Him and the Almighty accepts such prayers.

The words أَسْتَجِبْ لَكُمْ imply that the Almighty definitely accepts every right supplication. If He does not accept a supplication or defers it, then this means that there is some wisdom in this deference. People must feel contented on this because there is some good in it. It is totally useless to go to someone other than God for requests because it is only He Who has the authority to accept or reject requests, and it is only He Who knows the wisdom behind His actions. I have already explained the established practice of the Almighty regarding the acceptance of a supplication at an appropriate place of this *tafsīr*.

The words إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يَسْتَكْبِرُونَ عَنْ عِبَادَتِي سَيَدْخُلُونَ جَهَنَّمَ دَاخِرِينَ imply that in spite of this open declaration of God those who are showing indifference in worshipping Him merely because of arrogance should remember that soon they will enter Hell in a humiliating way because of this arrogance.

Earlier in verse fifty six it has been stated that those who are opposing Muḥammad (sws) are not doing so because they have any argument or because they are in some doubt; on the contrary, they are not doing so because their haughty political ambitions will be dented. They think that if they accept what he asks them to, then they will become inferiors and he will be superior to them. It is while referring to these people that it is said that those people who are evading the truth merely because of arrogance, they will humiliatingly enter Hell.

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47. And your Lord has said: "Call on me and I will accept your request. Those Who arrogantly evade worshipping Me shall enter Hell with all humiliation."

اللهُ الَّذِي جَعَلَ لَكُمُ اللَّيْلَ لِتَسْكُنُوا فِيهِ وَالنَّهَارَ مُبْصِرًا إِنَّ اللهَ لَذُو فَضْلٍ عَلَى النَّاسِ وَلَكِنَّ أَكْثَرَ النَّاسِ لَا يَشْكُرُونَ (٦١) ذَلِكُمُ اللهُ رَبُّكُمْ خَالِقُ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ لَّا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ فَأَنَّى تُؤْفَكُونَ (٦٢)[48]

In these verses, the word مُظْلِماً after اللَّيْلَ and لِتَعْلَموا after مُبْصِرًا are suppressed because of contextual indications. I have explained the nature of such suppressions at an appropriate place of this *tafsīr*.

In these verses, the Almighty has directed attention to those of His signs which simultaneously substantiate monotheism and the Hereafter. With respect to the providence found in them, they substantiate the Hereafter and with respect to the harmony found in them they substantiate monotheism. It is stated that it is God alone Who has made the night dark and moderate in temperature so that people can obtain comfort from it and He has lit up the day so that they can do their work in it. This is a great favour of God on people; however, most people are ungrateful to Him.

The implication is that even if all other signs are ignored and only the creation of night and day is reflected upon, these people will come to know that their Creator is very merciful. If He created the day to cater for their livelihood activities, He also created the night for them to provide them with peace and comfort. Now had He wanted only the day to exist continuously no one could have stopped Him or had He intended the night remain continuously even then no one would have had the power to benefit from the light of day. A natural consequence of this mercy should have been that people show gratitude to God but most people are not grateful.

Another natural consequence of God's mercy and providence is that He bring about a Day in which He reward those who recognized the rights of the favours of God and remained grateful to Him and punish those who did benefit from God's favours but remained ungrateful to Him. If He does not do so, then this means that the grateful and the ungrateful are equal. This obviously is wrong and against His justice.

The harmony between the night and the day which is a means to nurture and nourish man shows that various elements of this universe

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48. It was God who made the night dark for you so that you make rest in and lit up the day that you may work in it. God is bountiful to men, yet most people are not grateful. Indeed Allah alone is your Lord, the Creator of all things. There is no god but Him. So how do you show foolishness?

which apparently seem opposite to one another have great correspondence and conformity with one another. This is evidence of the fact that an exalted and wise being will definitely use these opposing elements in a wise manner. His will prevails on all and He is the creator and master of everything. The words are: ذَٰلِكُمُ اللهُ رَبُّكُمْ خَالِقُ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ لَّا إِلَٰهَ إِلَّا هُوَ فَأَنَّى تُؤْفَكُونَ.

كَذَٰلِكَ يُؤْفَكُ الَّذِينَ كَانُوا بِآيَاتِ اللهِ يَجْحَدُونَ (٦٣)[49]

A warning is sound to the Quraysh in this verse: the way they have lost their senses and by rejecting the simple call of the Qur'ān have strayed from the right path, in a similar way nations which have preceded them rejected the signs of God and strayed from the right path. The implication is that the Quraysh too will meet the fate these nations met if they too follow their ways.

اللهُ الَّذِي جَعَلَ لَكُمُ الْأَرْضَ قَرَارًا وَالسَّمَاء بِنَاء وَصَوَّرَكُمْ فَأَحْسَنَ صُوَرَكُمْ وَرَزَقَكُم مِّنَ الطَّيِّبَاتِ ذَٰلِكُمُ اللهُ رَبُّكُمْ فَتَبَارَكَ اللهُ رَبُّ الْعَالَمِينَ (٦٤)[50]

The topics of monotheism and Hereafter discussed earlier are taken up afresh in a new style in this verse. It is God Who has made the earth a dwelling place and the sky a roof and in this manner built for them a house in which people live. Their correlation and mutual harmony is a clear evidence of the fact that both are in the control of God. If they had separate gods, it could be very much possible that this house which these people are living in would never have even come into existence what to speak of its harmony. It is thus evident that it is God Who has made this house and it is He alone Whose rule prevails in both the heavens and the earth.

The words وَصَوَّرَكُمْ فَأَحْسَنَ صُوَرَكُمْ refer to the fact that after bringing into existence a decorated and embellished house God created man and created him in a form better than all other creations. The word إِحْسَانٌ means "to do something in a befitting manner". At another instance, this topic is discussed in the following words in the Qur'ān: لَقَدْ خَلَقْنَا الْإِنسَانَ فِي

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49. Similar foolishness was shown by those have been denying God's revelations.

50. It is God who has made the earth a dwelling-place for you, and the sky a roof and moulded your bodies and did so in a befitting manner and provided you with wholesome things. Such is God, your Lord. Thus very blessed is God, Lord of the Universe.

أَحْسَنِ تَقْوِيمٍ (٩٥: ٤) (We have created man in the finest of moulds, (95:4)). The best of moulds here obviously does not refer merely to man's appearance; it also refers to the most appropriate proportion of material and ma'anawi abilities and capabilities because of which man has become superior to all other creations of this world.

The words وَرَزَقَكُم مِّنَ الطَّيِّبَاتِ refer to the fact that just as the Almighty brought into existence a beautifully embellished house for them, He also provided them with sustenance of pure things.

The words ذَلِكُمُ اللهُ رَبُّكُمْ فَتَبَارَكَ اللهُ رَبُّ الْعَالَمِينَ imply that God is the Lord of people as well as of the universe and He is very blessed and munificent.

هُوَ الْحَيُّ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ فَادْعُوهُ مُخْلِصِينَ لَهُ الدِّينَ الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ (٦٥)[51]

It is the Almighty Who is truly living and bestows life. Others whom people worship besides Him are as specified at another instance: أَمْوَاتٌ غَيْرُ أَحْيَاءٍ (١٦: ٢١) ie the dead who are devoid of life. They neither hear nor are able to help anyone. It is fruitless whether they are called or not as is. So people should only call God and with full sincerity obey Him because it is only God, Lord of the worlds, Who is worthy of showing gratitude to.

قُلْ إِنِّي نُهِيتُ أَنْ أَعْبُدَ الَّذِينَ تَدْعُونَ مِن دُونِ اللهِ لَمَّا جَاءَنِيَ الْبَيِّنَاتُ مِن رَّبِّي وَأُمِرْتُ أَنْ أُسْلِمَ لِرَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ (٦٦)[52]

These words are an answer from the tongue of the Prophet (sws) to those contentious people who were disputing with him in support of their deities. He is told to warn them that he has been stopped to worship the deities they worship besides God; however much they may force him, he will not worship them especially when there has come to them very clear signs in this regard. He has been directed to totally submit himself to God ie. Worship Him only and obey Him only. This declaration of acquittal has been made so that if his opponents in any way think that they can soften him up by pressurizing him, then they should have no hope in this.

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51. He is the Living One; there is no god but Him so invoke Him only with His pure obedience. Gratitude is for Him, Lord of the Universe!

52. Say: "I have been forbidden to worship which you invoke besides God now that clear signs have come to me from my Lord. And I have been asked to submit myself.

هُوَ الَّذِي خَلَقَكُم مِّن تُرَابٍ ثُمَّ مِن نُّطْفَةٍ ثُمَّ مِنْ عَلَقَةٍ ثُمَّ يُخْرِجُكُمْ طِفْلًا ثُمَّ لِتَبْلُغُوا أَشُدَّكُمْ ثُمَّ لِتَكُونُوا شُيُوخًا وَمِنكُم مَّن يُتَوَفَّى مِن قَبْلُ وَلِتَبْلُغُوا أَجَلًا مُّسَمًّى وَلَعَلَّكُمْ تَعْقِلُونَ (٦٧) [53]

Some parts of this verse are suppressed keeping in view the conventional style of Arabic. I have tried to reveal these expressions and at other instances of this *tafsīr*, have also given parallels of such a style.

The verse implies that if man reflects on his creation and on the phases of his creation, then they are sufficient to point to God's power and wisdom as well as to belief in monotheism and hereafter. The verse says that the Almighty began man's creation with clay; then later generations were born through a drop of fluid. This drop initially assumes the shape of a clot and then gradually develops into a foetus and then the Almighty extracts it from the womb of the mother in the form of a living infant.

The words ثُمَّ لِتَبْلُغُوا أَشُدَّكُمْ ثُمَّ لِتَكُونُوا شُيُوخًا refer to the fact that after creating man, God nourishes him so that he reaches adolescence and then God gives him more time until old age. In other words, the subject of nourishing them and giving them time is suppressed before لِتَبْلُغُوا (so that you reach) and لِتَكُونُوا (so that you become).

The words وَمِنكُم مَّن يُتَوَفَّى مِن قَبْلُ وَلِتَبْلُغُوا أَجَلًا مُّسَمًّى imply that it is not always the case that each infant reaches adolescence. Many die in infancy and there are many who are given time but that too till a certain period. No one is given any indefinite lifespan. Here before the word لِتَبْلُغُوا a sentence to this effect is suppressed: there are many among you who are given time.

The words وَلَعَلَّكُمْ تَعْقِلُونَ allude to the reason because of which the Almighty has made man pass through these ups and downs of life?). Why did He not create man in his final form from the earth or sent him down from the heavens? The verse says that He did this so that man reflects on all the phases of his creation and understand the marvels and majesties and the power and wisdom of their Lord and profess faith in them. I have referred to at another instance of this *tafsīr* that the Almighty has created this world in such a way that it has become the best source of learning all the facts which are necessary for the well-being and salvation of man.

53. It is He Who created you from clay, then from a little germ, then from a clot of blood. He then brings you into this world as infants; He then nourishes you so that you may reach your adolescence. Then He gives you time to reach old age. And some of you die before this and to some He gives times to complete an appointed term. And this is because you may understand.

Here too before لَعَلَّكُمْ words to the following effect are suppressed: God has created you in this manner so that you reflect on your creation and comprehend the power and wisdom of the Almighty.

How can it said be said that it is difficult for God to re-create man or someone can stop him from doing so when He created man with such power and wisdom, Who has complete and unshared authority and control over the life and death, young and old age of a person and Who has prescribed a time period for the life of every living being. All this shows that He has no partner and that He shall one day necessarily gather people to take account from them and this task is not the least difficult for Him. In order to fully understand this subject, readers are advised to look up verse eleven of Sūrah Fāṭir.

هُوَ الَّذِي يُحْيِي وَيُمِيتُ فَإِذَا قَضَى أَمْرًا فَإِنَّمَا يَقُولُ لَهُ كُن فَيَكُونُ (٦٨)[54]

The verse refers to the fact that life and death are totally under God's control and such is the extent of His power that when He makes a decision to do something there is nothing which can stop His intention to materialize. He need only say: be and it is done and is done in a manner He wants. The implication is that people should understand the matter of the Hereafter also on similar lines. When He decides to bring it about He will only utter a command and it will appear in the blink of an eye.

أَلَمْ تَرَ إِلَى الَّذِينَ يُجَادِلُونَ فِي آيَاتِ اللهِ أَنَّى يُصْرَفُونَ (٦٩)[55]

The implication is that these facts are all very clear but these wretched people have lost their senses because they are indulging in frivolous talk to deny these obvious verses of God.

الَّذِينَ كَذَّبُوا بِالْكِتَابِ وَبِمَا أَرْسَلْنَا بِهِ رُسُلَنَا فَسَوْفَ يَعْلَمُونَ (٧٠) [56]

The word الْكِتَاب refers to the Qur'ān. These verses state their crime: they not only rejected the Qur'ān, they also rejected all the teachings with which the Almighty sent His prophets. All the prophets have basically taught the same message to people which the Qur'ān is calling them to; so rejecting the Qur'ān is like rejecting all the prophets. The

54. It is He Who gives life and Who gives death. So when He decrees a thing, He need only say: "Be," and it is.

55. Do you not see those who indulge in baseless arguments about the revelations of God? Where are they turned away.

56. Those who have denied the Book of God and those things as well which We sent with Our Messengers. They shall soon know

words فَسَوْفَ يَعْلَمُونَ are a threat. If they dare reject the Qur'ān, they will soon see the fate of this rejection.

إِذِ الْأَغْلَالُ فِي أَعْنَاقِهِمْ وَالسَّلَاسِلُ يُسْحَبُونَ (٧١) فِي الْحَمِيمِ ثُمَّ فِي النَّارِ يُسْجَرُونَ (٧٢)[57]

In my opinion the word فِي أَرْجُلِهِمْ (in their feet) are suppressed after وَالسَّلَاسِلُ. I have translated the verse accordingly. The verse says that since they denied the verses of God because of arrogance, their necks shall be shackled and their feet shall be enchained. After that they will be dragged into boiling water and then thrown into Hell. The expression سَجَرَ التَّنُوْر means "the kiln was filled with fuel".

ثُمَّ قِيلَ لَهُمْ أَيْنَ مَا كُنتُمْ تُشْرِكُونَ (٧٣) مِن دُونِ اللهِ قَالُوا ضَلُّوا عَنَّا بَل لَّمْ نَكُن نَّدْعُو مِن قَبْلُ شَيْئًا كَذَلِكَ يُضِلُّ اللهُ الْكَافِرِينَ (٧٤)[58]

After that, they will be asked: "Speak up! Where are the deities which you have set up with God who can save you from His grasp; if they exist, call them up so that they can save you from punishment. The words مِن دُونِ اللهِ here refer to those who oppose God and it is used in this meaning. I have explained this at an appropriate place in this *tafsīr*.

They reply will be that all these deities have been lost to them and that in fact they have not been worshipping anything earlier. In other words, at first they will acknowledge that they had some deities whom they worshipped but that none of them is here to help them; however, when they will realize that it is because of their worshipping these deities that they are facing this horrific fate, they will refute the existence of these deities expecting that this might somewhat be beneficial to them. It is evident from other instances of the Qur'ān that on the Day of Judgement the Idolaters would be afflicted with such *badhawasi* that in the same breath they will acclaim their deities as well as reject them. I have discussed this while explaining verses twenty three and twenty four of Sūrah An'ām.

The words كَذَلِكَ يُضِلُّ اللهُ الْكَافِرِينَ allude to this very simultaneous acknowledgement and denial: the punishment of the Almighty will make them so badly lose their wits that they will not even know what they

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57. when there will be yolks round their necks and shackles [around their feet]; they shall be dragged through boiling water; then cast into the fire of Hell.

58. Then they will be asked: "Where are those whom you associated with God?" They will reply: "They have forsaken us; in fact, we have never been worshipping anything." In this way, God will make the disbelievers lose their senses.

have already said and what they are now saying. This has already been explained earlier and in verse forty of the next *sūrah*: Sūrah Ḥām mīm al-Sajdah this subject is coming up again. There, God willing, it shall be further explained.

ذَلِكُم بِمَا كُنتُمْ تَفْرَحُونَ فِي الْأَرْضِ بِغَيْرِ الْحَقِّ وَبِمَا كُنتُمْ تَمْرَحُونَ (٧٥)[59]

The verse implies that whatever has come before these people is the result of their baseless arrogance and conceit. Whatever they had been blessed with in the previous world were never owned by them; on the contrary, everything was given to them by God and as a result it was their obligation to these things that they thank God for them and show obedience to Him; however, they came to regard these blessings of God to be their personal right and arrogance and haughtiness got the better of them. Intoxicated with this conceit they insulted and denied the messengers of God who tried to remind them of the actual reality.

Everything of the heavens and the earth has been created by God and belongs to Him alone. Hence conceit is only befitting for Him and no one else. If anyone else does so then this بِغَيْرِ الْحَقِّ (baseless) and He is trying to wear the special robe of the Almighty which is nothing but polytheism. It is towards this reality that the words of the following narrative allude to: الكبرياء ردائي (greatness is my robe).[60]

ادْخُلُوا أَبْوَابَ جَهَنَّمَ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا فَبِئْسَ مَثْوَى الْمُتَكَبِّرِينَ (٧٦)[61]

The implication is that presenting any excuse at this time is of no use. These gates of Hell are open. The reference is to the seven gates of Hell explained at another instance. It shall be said to them: "Enter them and now you shall have to stay here forever and never expect that you will get out of here." While turning the face away from them, it shall be further said: فَبِئْسَ مَثْوَى الْمُتَكَبِّرِينَ (so what an evil abode is it for the arrogant.)

فَاصْبِرْ إِنَّ وَعْدَ اللهِ حَقٌّ فَإِمَّا نُرِيَنَّكَ بَعْضَ الَّذِي نَعِدُهُمْ أَوْ نَتَوَفَّيَنَّكَ فَإِلَيْنَا يُرْجَعُونَ (٧٧)[62]

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59. This is because without any basis you showed pride and conceit in the land.

60. Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal, *Musnad*, vol. 2, 248, (no. 7376).

61. Enter the gates of Hell to stay therein forever. What an evil abode it is for the arrogant.

62. Therefore, show perseverance. Indeed, the promise of God is bound to come true. Either We will show you a glimpse of the punishment We are threatening them with or give death to you. Thus to Us shall they return.

These words sound an assurance to the Prophet (sws) that he should show patience on the misdeeds of his opponents. If they do not mend their ways the punishment with which they are being threatened with is bound to come; either a part of it shall be shown to him in his lifetime and if this does not happen then one day they will have to finally return to God Who will punish them in the Hereafter. Here it may be kept in mind that the messengers of God always warned their people of two types of punishment: the first of them is the one which will visit them in this world if reject their respective messenger and the second of them is the one which they will face in the Hereafter. The words بَعْضَ الَّذِي نَعِدُهُمْ refer to the first of these punishments because with reference to its essence it is part of the punishment of the Hereafter which every disbeliever and idolater will have to necessarily face there. In accordance with the established practice of God about His messengers, the nation of the Prophet Muḥammad (sws) was threatened with worldly punishment as well in case they rejected him; however, the majority embraced faith; hence no such punishment visited them as visited the rejecters of the previous messengers; the matter of their mischievous elements was deferred to the Hereafter to which the words فَإِلَيْنَا يُرْجَعُونَ (so to Us will they be returned) allude to here.

وَلَقَدْ أَرْسَلْنَا رُسُلًا مِّن قَبْلِكَ مِنْهُم مَّن قَصَصْنَا عَلَيْكَ وَمِنْهُم مَّن لَّمْ نَقْصُصْ عَلَيْكَ وَمَا كَانَ لِرَسُولٍ أَنْ يَأْتِيَ بِآيَةٍ إِلَّا بِإِذْنِ اللهِ فَإِذَا جَاء أَمْرُ اللهِ قُضِيَ بِالْحَقِّ وَخَسِرَ هُنَالِكَ الْمُبْطِلُونَ (٧٨)[63]

Here assurance is again sounded through a special aspect. It is has been the customary practice of the rejecters of God's messengers that when they warned them of God's wrath and punishment, then to pester the messenger their addressees asked their messenger to show them an sample of this punishment. One answer to this demand has been given in the previous *sūrah*. Now another aspect of this answer is explained here in this verse: the history of the messengers of God bears witness that a messenger does not have the authority to show such signs; on the

63. And We sent forth other messengers before you; We have already recounted the accounts of some before you and there are some others whose account We have not recounted before you. And none of these messengers had the power to show a sign except by God's permission. Thus when God's decree arrives, justice shall prevail and at that time the evil-doers will be among the losers.

contrary, all this depends on the wisdom of God; if it had been a requisite of His wisdom He would have sent this punishment and vice versa; people should neither demand this sign from their messenger nor should a messenger be worried on this demand from his people; this much should remain clear that when the decree of God is delivered complete justice is done and at that time those people are taken to task who deny the truth and reject the messengers of God.

اللهُ الَّذِي جَعَلَ لَكُمُ الْأَنْعَامَ لِتَرْكَبُوا مِنْهَا وَمِنْهَا تَأْكُلُونَ (٧٩) وَلَكُمْ فِيهَا مَنَافِعُ
وَلِتَبْلُغُوا عَلَيْهَا حَاجَةً فِي صُدُورِكُمْ وَعَلَيْهَا وَعَلَى الْفُلْكِ تُحْمَلُونَ (٨٠) وَيُرِيكُمْ آيَاتِهِ
فَأَيَّ آيَاتِ اللهِ تُنكِرُونَ (٨١)[64]

A demand for the sign of punishment was stated in the previous verse. There the Prophet was assured that this matter relates to God and hence he should consign it to God. In this verse, attention of those who were demanding a sign of punishment is directed to the signs of God's providence; why do they demand a sign of punishment; why do they not reflect on the numerous signs of God's providence which are found all around them. He created for your four-legged beasts some of which are useful to them as a means of transport; some others are useful in providing food to them; moreover, they have other benefits for them as well. God has created these animals in such a ways that people ride on them and go out for various campaigns and realize their plans. This is a reference to the camel which was no less than the ship of the desert for the Arabs. The verse says that people embark on these means of transport to travel long distances and also alight on the ships for their journeys. The verse prods these people by asking them that are these not enough signs of God. How many of the signs will they deny. The implication is that will the Lord Who has made such elaborate arrangement to fulfill their needs let them go scot free and not hold them unaccountable. If the answer to this question is in the affirmative, then this is the very warning which their messenger is sounding to them; so what is this excuse that they have invented to deny his warning that why is God not showing a sign of His punishment. As for the signs are concerned, they are innumerable; unfortunately, these people do have the

64. It is God who has created beasts for you so that you can use some to ride on and some others are used as food for you and they have other benefits for you as well and has also created them so that may fulfill some of your heart's desires; and on them and on ships you are boarded. And He shows you other innumerable signs; so which of God's signs will you deny?

eyes to behold them.

أَفَلَمْ يَسِيرُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ فَيَنظُرُوا كَيْفَ كَانَ عَاقِبَةُ الَّذِينَ مِن قَبْلِهِمْ كَانُوا أَكْثَرَ مِنْهُمْ وَأَشَدَّ قُوَّةً وَآثَارًا فِي الْأَرْضِ فَمَا أَغْنَى عَنْهُم مَّا كَانُوا يَكْسِبُونَ (٨٢)[65]

This verse directs the attention of those people who were demanding to see the punishment to the history of the previous nations: if they are unable to see the signs of providence, then have not even travelled in their land to see the fate of previous nations who had denied their respective messengers even though they were much more powerful and greater in number and were far superior in their building and constructional feats; however, when the punishment of God came, then none of the things they had gathered and amassed could be of any benefit to them

The word آثَارًا is related to أَكْثَرَ. It is a reference to he architectural feats of the 'Ād and the Thamūd that have been alluded to at other places of the Qur'ān. It is evident from this that when a nations falls into moral decadence, then it cannot survive merely on the basis of its large numbers or feats that stamp their culture and civilization.

فَلَمَّا جَاءتْهُمْ رُسُلُهُم بِالْبَيِّنَاتِ فَرِحُوا بِمَا عِندَهُم مِّنَ الْعِلْمِ وَحَاقَ بِهِم مَّا كَانُوا بِهِ يَسْتَهْزِؤُون (٨٣)[66]

The verse says that when the messengers of God came to these nations with very clear signs about monotheism, the Hereafter and reward and punishment, they made fun of their calls and remained arrogant on what they believed. Eventually, the punishment which they mocked at surrounded them. The implication is that because of their meanness they regarded their meager knowledge to be great and reckoned that whatever they see from their eyes is all that exists and could not comprehend that there are world beyond this.

فَلَمَّا رَأَوْا بَأْسَنَا قَالُوا آمَنَّا بِاللَّهِ وَحْدَهُ وَكَفَرْنَا بِمَا كُنَّا بِهِ مُشْرِكِينَ (٨٤) فَلَمْ يَكُ يَنفَعُهُمْ

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65. Have they not journeyed through the land to see the fate of those before them. They were more numerous than them in the land with regard to their splendour more powerful than them; yet all their feats were of no use to them.

66. So when their messengers came to them with very clear signs, they proudly boasted of their own knowledge. And the punishment which they made fun of surrounded them.

إِيمَانُهُمْ لَمَّا رَأَوْا بَأْسَنَا سُنَّتَ اللهِ الَّتِي قَدْ خَلَتْ فِي عِبَادِهِ وَخَسِرَ هُنَالِكَ الْكَافِرُونَ (٨٥)[67]

The verse refers to the fact that the arguments and reasoning of the messengers did not induce them to profess faith; however, when they saw the punishment of God, they immediately declared their faith in the one and only God and denied their deities which they associated with God. They are told that this faith which they are now professing after seeing the punishment was of no avail to them; the punishment totally routed them. Only that faith is acceptable to God which is embraced on the basis of reasoning before the punishment visits them. If time for this passes and the hour of punishment looms over their heads, then such faith will be absolutely useless to them. The verse states that this has always remained the practice of God with His people. When the punishment arrives, then those who reject it at that time are definitely ruined and humiliated.

By the grace of God, I come to the end of this *sūrah*. فَالْحَمْدُ لِلّٰهِ عَلَى ذَالِكَ (so gratitude be to God on this).

Lahore
27th August 1975
19th Sha'bān 1395 AH

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67. So when they beheld Our punishment, they said: "We now believe in the one God and deny those which We served besides Him." But their faith was of no avail to them when they saw Our punishment. Such is the established practice of God which manifested itself among His servants earlier on as well and at that time the disbelievers end up as losers.